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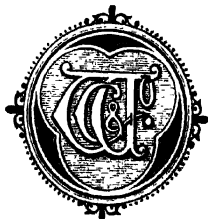


OF

COMMON LIFE.

BY "WATERS,

AUTHOR OF "A SKELETON IN EVERY HOUSE," &c.



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# The Romance of Common Life.

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## No. 1.—RETRIBUTION.

ONE afternoon towards the close of the month *Brumaire*, year 2, of the French Republic—November 1793 by Christian reckoning—Mrs. Arlington, a recently-widowed English lady, was engaged with her only remaining attendant, Annette Vaudry, an honest Bordelaise, in making preparations to quit Paris for the south-west of France, where she hoped to find means of embarking for England. Her husband, whose long and painful illness, rendering his removal impossible, had detained them so many months in the distracted city, expired a few days before, and had been privately and hurriedly buried at Père la Chaise. He left his wife and child not only friendless in a land of strangers, but surrounded and in danger of being engulfed by the eddies of a sanguinary revolution. Full

of terror as of grief had been the days and nights passed by Mrs. Arlington at the bedside of her suffering husband—strange and appalling the *spectra* which had flitted past the sick man's windows. Early in the year the death-tumbrils conveying a king to execution had swept by; and but lately, the queen and Madame Roland, D'Orleans and the Girondists, with a host of minor victims, had followed to the same doom. Terror, all-potent anarchy of the time, was solemnly enthroned, and the very air pulsated with fear. The British Government had replied to the announcement of the death of the king by a declaration of war; and, if betrayed to the authorities as a long traitorously concealed countrywoman of "Pitt"—the *bête noire* of Paris clubbists—as the widow of a gentleman known to have been on terms of intimacy with many of the fallen aristocrats, the fate of Mrs. Arlington might, without the gift of prophecy, have been easily foretold. Fortunately, the persons with whom for the last ten months she had been domiciled—ardent republicans as they might be—were trustworthy and kind-hearted; and Annette Vaudry—the English servants had been sent off at the first intimation of danger—proved equally faithful and discreet. It was amid this terrible state of affairs that Mrs. Arlington, having, to her joyful surprise, not only obtained in her assumed name of Le Bon a passport, but a certificate of civism, without which no one could pass the barriers, prepared for her dangerous journey to Bordeaux, the native city of

Annette, where it was thought means of leaving France might be with less risk sought for and obtained than at nearer but more jealously watched ports.

Another and all-sufficing reason with Mrs. Arlington for undertaking this long journey to the south, instead of attempting to escape by way of Havre or Calais, was her determination not to separate from her daughter, a child of scarcely three years of age, except in the last extremity. Annette Vaudry, as a native of Bordeaux, had not the slightest difficulty, on exhibiting her passport at the Hôtel de Ville, to get it *visé*, or indorsed, in order to be enabled to return to the place of her birth. There was no danger that she would excite the slightest suspicion; and Mrs. Arlington resolved, with the view of insuring, in all eventualities, the safety of her child, that it should pass during the journey as Annette's. It had also been determined, in the event of Mrs. Arlington being detained, or of any other misfortune befalling her, that Annette should as speedily as possible pass over to England with her precious charge. The mistress and servant were to travel in the same diligence, but there was to be no apparent acquaintance between them. Their places had been secured by different messengers, and they were to arrive separately at the office from whence the vehicle took its final departure from Paris. Annette Vaudry was also necessarily intrusted with a large sum of money in gold and jewels.

Mrs. Arlington's preparations were at length com-

plete ; Annette and the little Julie were already gone ; and, bidding her kind hosts an affectionate farewell, she left her place of refuge, disguised as a French countrywoman of the humbler classes, and escorted by a porter, who had undertaken to carry her purposely scanty luggage. Evening had set in, and a cold, drizzling rain was falling, but the ill-lighted, dirty streets were nevertheless alive with groups of men and women eagerly engaged in discussing the politics and most stirring incidents of the day ; and occasionally, on passing a café or wine-shop, the door would be suddenly flung open, and gangs of noisy revellers—their sinister features briefly but strongly marked in the streaming light—bursting forth, helped to swell the wild yells and *Ca ira* exultations which filled the air. Not the humblest fiacre could proceed any considerable distance without the inmates, if any, undergoing the rude scrutiny of suspicious patriotism ; and Mrs. Arlington tremblingly congratulated herself on having followed Monsieur Henri's earnest advice, to walk rather than ride to the barrier. Happily, too, the man who carried her luggage was well known to many of the excited republicans as a *bon camarade* ; and his off-hand replies to the queries apparently suggested by the patrician features and graceful carriage of the supposed countrywoman, amply justified the said Henri's commendation of him, and enabled her to escape the peril of being detained or questioned by those eager caterers for the guillotine. With trembling limbs and

beating heart she passed along, and at length reached the bureau of the diligence, close to the Barrière du Maine. Arrived there, a still more perilous scrutiny awaited her from the agents of the commune, in attendance to deprive suspected persons of all chance of escape. Deadly pale, and wholly unable to master the betraying emotions which agitated her frame, Mrs. Arlington tendered her papers for the principal official's inspection.

"Approche, donc, citoyenne," said the man somewhat coarsely. let us see if the writer of these papers is a good hand at a likeness. Humph! 'Twenty-three years of age, light-brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion'—not absolutely incorrect, certainly, but still conveying a very poor impression of the charming original, who is, I must say, the most splendid specimen of a *bonne bourgeoise* travelling to the Gironde on family affairs I ever had the honour of meeting. Entrez, citoyenne," continued the official, with a malicious grin, "we must have some further conversation together. You, conducteur, may proceed; this good Madame Le Bon will scarcely pass the barrier to-night."

A cry of despair, impossible to repress, broke from the terrified lady, and she turned instinctively towards the diligence, as if to snatch one last embrace of her child.

"This way, citoyenne," cried the officer, rudely seizing her by the arm.

"How now, Rigaud," suddenly broke in a fierce, authoritative voice; "what do you mean by arresting my *compagne de voyage*? Are you mad?"

The speaker was a handsome young man in the uniform of a dragoon officer, who, unperceived by Mrs. Arlington, had followed her from her lodgings, and without whose aid, in reassuring and suspicious *bonnets rouges* and *tappe-durs*, but half satisfied by the explanations of the porter, she would scarcely have reached so far.

"Your travelling companion, Captain Duplessis?"

"Certainly! Madame," continued the stranger, respectfully addressing Mrs. Arlington, "allow me to apologise for this man's rudeness, and at the same time to hand you to your seat."

"Monsieur Henri!" ejaculated the bewildered lady.

"Not a word, madame," he hurriedly whispered as he closed the door, "as you value your own and your child's safety."

"Well, but, capitaine!" persisted the somewhat mystified official.

"*Ah ca*, no impertinence, Rigaud: here are my papers; they are *en règle*, I believe. Or is it, perchance," added the officer with simulated vehemence, perceiving that Rigaud still hesitated, "that you, notoriously one of the Danton faction, affect doubts you do not really feel, in order to annoy or delay the friend and messenger of Saint Just?"

"Not at all, not at all," hurriedly replied the official,

in his turn a little alarmed, for in those days no man's head felt quite firmly on his shoulders; "but this person is evidently no Bordeaux bourgeoisie, as she is designated in these papers; and, with all proper deference to you, she must remain here till further inquiry be made. Saint Just is not a man to screen plotters or aristocrats. Please to descend, madame," he continued, at the same time reopening the door of the diligence, and seizing Mrs. Arlington by the arm. "Descend, if you please, and at once!"

"*Scélérat!*" shouted Duplessis, unable to restrain himself, and hurling Rigaud with stunning violence against the door of the bureau. Half-a-dozen fellows sprang forward to the assistance of their chief, and the affair would no doubt have terminated fatally, not only for the lady, but possibly at least for her chivalrous protector, had it not been for the opportune arrival of a youngish man, who, wrapt comfortably in a stout cloak, was stepping briskly along, and humming, as he went, a light joyous air, as if in defiance both of the times and the weather.

"Camille," exclaimed Duplessis, struggling fiercely in the grasp of the guardians of the barrier, "is that you?"

"Assuredly! And you? What, Cousin Henri! What is the meaning of this? Why, Rigaud, you must be crazed!"

"I think not, Citoyen Desmoulins," replied that officer, addressing Danton's friend and intimate with



great respect, and at the same time, by a sign, releasing Duplessis; "but this gentleman persists in passing an *élégante* through the barrier in the disguise of a *pay-sanne*."

"How is this, Henri?"

"A word in your ear, Camille," said Duplessis, drawing his friend and relative out of the hearing of Mrs. Arlington. "This lady, Camille, is"—The rest of the sentence was whispered in his cousin's ear.

"What, *la belle Marguerite*? And a runaway match too! Why, I understood she was as cold as snow. Oh you sly fox!" and the gay-spirited editor of the "Vieux Cordelier" laughed prodigiously. "Rigaud, you must permit the lady to pass. It is an affair of the heart—you understand? At all events I will be answerable for the consequences, and that, I suppose, will suffice."

"As you please, citoyen," muttered Rigaud. "But"—

"Enough, enough. Let there be no further delay, for this weather is frightful. Adieu, Henri. My compliments to the lady. Call on us directly you return; Lucile will be delighted to see you both: I shall remember you to her. *Au revoir!*" The diligence rumbled through the barrier, and Camille Desmoulins, glad to have extricated his cousin from an unpleasant situation, passed gaily on, humming

"Où peut-on être mieux  
Qu'au sein de sa famille?"

“Excellent!” murmured the dissatisfied official, as the coach pursued its way. “A wedding trip, no doubt; and the bridegroom, I see, prefers riding outside in this bitter weather to being seated within beside the bride! One would not lightly offend Camille; still, this affair must be sifted. Where is the man who brought the lady’s luggage? Oh, there you are. Step this way, friend, if you please; I must have a word or two with you.” The porter obeyed, and they passed together into the bureau de police.

The officer whose energetic interference thus saved Mrs. Arlington from arrest and its too-surely fatal consequences was Henri Duplessis, captain in a dragoon regiment attached to the Army of the North. Saint Just, in his frequent hurried visits to that army, for the purpose of insuring the faithful and energetic execution of his own and Carnot’s instructions, had more than once witnessed with admiration the young officer’s conduct under fire; and a close friendship, quite irrespective of politics, had, in consequence, sprung up between them. Duplessis had been lately summoned to the capital to give evidence before the Committee of Public Safety on various military details, and whilst there had happened to call upon his maternal uncle, M. de Liancourt, just as this eminent physician received a note from Madame Le Bon—Mrs. Arlington—requesting his immediate attendance on her husband, with whom life seemed rapidly closing, in consequence of a renewed effusion of blood.

M. de Liancourt, or rather Citoyen Liancourt, was a physician in high practice; affecting ardent republicanism before the world, but to his intimates holding very different language.

"Henri," said he, rising as soon as he had finished the perusal of Mrs. Arlington's note, and seizing his hat and gloves, "if you have a fancy to look upon a beautiful *aristocrate*—a rare sight now in France, thanks to the sharp practice of your friends—come with me. You are not in uniform, and I will introduce you as an assistant. *Allons!*"

"Le Bon is a very aristocratic name truly," said Duplessis, as they emerged into the street.

"Merely a disguise: her name is Arlington, and she is a native of 'perfid Albion.'"

"An Englishwoman! What misfortune can have detained her here?"

"The sudden illness of her husband, who imprudently delayed his departure in order to effect the arrangement of a heavy pecuniary claim he had against D'Orleans, contracted, I believe, when that very estimable personage was in England."

"Was he at all involved in Egalité's intrigues?"

"Nonsense! But what, in this second year of Fraternity and Liberty would, as interpreted by the excellent Tinville—a remarkable artist that, in his own very original line—prove quite as conclusive for all necessary purposes, Mr. Arlington used sometimes to idle away an hour or two at Sainte Amaranthe's with Vergniaud, Buzot, and others of that set."

"In that case he does well to conceal himself."

"Yes; your guillotine is a sharp reasoner in such cases—brief and thoroughly conclusive in all matters of doubt and difficulty. By the way, Henri, your fiery enthusiasm for the Republic, one and indivisible, seems to have strangely cooled of late. The fall, a few days since, of the beautiful head of Madame Roland appears to have suggested doubts to a great number of the enthusiastic youths of this delightful city."

"Not doubts, Monsieur de Liancourt, of the glory and excellence of freedom: say rather that it engendered abhorrence of the men who by such acts stain and dim its lustre. But let us talk of other things. This Englishwoman, is she so very beautiful?"

"Singularly so; even for that land of female loveliness. You know I resided there several years."

"And an *aristocrate*?"

"By birth, feeling, education, manners—*yes*; though in a sense quite opposed to our use of the term. In active, political creed, these fair islanders are far behind our *dames de la Halle*. And in truth, Henri, if the divinities of social life *will* soil their white wings in the accursed caldron of politics, they cannot be surprised if—— But here we are."

The apartment into which the physician and his nephew were stealthily ushered was a large, and apparently handsomely-furnished one, as far as could be discerned by the dull light of a cloudy November day,

struggling through the heavy and partially-closed window-curtains. The glance of Duplessis became rivetted the instant he entered, upon the pale, patrician features of a gentleman but little more than his own age, who was reclining upon a sofa, with his head supported by pillows. Death, he saw at once, had set his fatal signet there; and soldier as he was, and custom-hardened to such sights, an emotion of profound pity swept across his mind at the contemplation of the premature end of one so young, so eager for life, as a man loved by the beautiful bending over him in tearful grief must necessarily be. Mrs. Arlington, who had been reading to the patient, rose as De Liancourt softly advanced, and questioned with the mute eloquence of her radiant eyes—which sorrow seemed but to gem with a diviner lustre—the oracle from whose lips the words of fate were about to fall. Not so her husband. The agitation of a feverish hope no longer fluttered the spirit of the dying man. His glance continued fixed upon the countenance of his wife with an expression of anxious tenderness, as if the stroke which he felt could not be long averted must needs fall on her with greatest force; and that look deepened in its unselfish love when De Liancourt, in the low, calm accents of professional decision, said, “My fears, often expressed, are verified. Life with you, my dear sir, is near, very near its close.”

A cry of uncontrollable grief burst from the young wife at this confirmation of her worst fears. She threw

herself on her knees beside the couch of her dying husband, and kissed his pale thin hands with vehement emotion.

"Julia, beloved friend—companion—wife," murmured Mr. Arlington, "you promised to bear this visitation with a Christian's patience, with the devotedness and hope of a mother whose child is still spared to her?" He was answered only by convulsive sobs, and presently continued—"Now that our excellent De Liancourt is with us, let us not, dearest, waste the brief moments remaining to me in unavailing lamentations. *I* shall soon be beyond the reach of man's violence and enmity, but you—our child"——

He paused, and his anxious look was turned towards the physician. De Liancourt's countenance fell.

"Have you made the inquiries we spoke of?" said Mr. Arlington, with an expression of dismay which the announcement of inevitable and almost immediate death had not been able to produce.

"I have, and fear that some delay must still be endured. The scrutiny to which all persons who attempt to pass the barriers are subjected becomes daily more stringent, so that"——

"God of heaven!" interrupted the dying man, "this is indeed to taste of the full bitterness of death!"

Mrs. Arlington, panic-stricken by a new terror, started wildly on her feet, snatched a beautiful child, sleeping on an ottoman beside her, with passionate eagerness to her arms, and for the first time

afforded Duplessis a full view of her person and countenance.

He felt his heart beat tumultuously, and his eyes fill with irrepressible emotion as he gazed upon that pale, yet queenly and brilliant vision, with its Madona attitude and grace, and subduing tenderness of sorrowful expression. To what painter, to what poet, had lettings down of Heaven revealed angelic beauty like to that? He essayed to speak, but the words died on his tongue.

"We must still trust," continued De Liancourt soothingly, "in the merciful Providence which has so long shielded"—

"I have influence, madame—sir," broke in Duplessis, recovering his voice, and speaking with a confused and hurried earnestness; "influence with my friends Saint Just, Carnot. I will insure the safety of the lady, of the child, at the hazard of my life—my life!" He paused in extreme disorder. A thousand lights seemed to dance before his eyes, and a multitude of sounds were ringing in his ears.

"Who is this gentleman, De Liancourt?" demanded Mr. Arlington with something of the haughtiness of manner which distinguished him when the pulse of life beat high and full. Mrs. Arlington, who had not before observed Duplessis, coloured with surprise as the agitated tones of the young man caught her ear.

"My nephew, Henri," replied the physician. "He has, as he says, some influence at head-quarters, and will, I doubt not, willingly exert it."

"His *friends* Saint Just and Carnot of the 'Salut Public!' But that you, De Liancourt, vouch for him"——

The countenance of Duplessis flamed at the implied suspicion of his honour, and his uncle hastily interrupted the speaker.

"My nephew is not the friend, my dear sir, of those persons in the sense you apprehend; and I would pledge my life upon his faith."

"Enough, De Liancourt—your word suffices; and you, sir, will, I trust, excuse the momentary doubt of a person anxious for the safety of a wife and child. If you *can* aid them to escape from this place of violence and crime, the prayers and blessings of a dying man will be yours."

Duplessis reiterated his offers of service in a calmer and more coherent manner than before; and then, at the suggestion of De Liancourt, who feared that the excitement of such a conversation might hasten the fatal crisis, which, however, could not be long delayed, the conference terminated—the physician promising, as he left the apartment, to look in again early on the morrow.

"Henri," said De Liancourt gravely, as he shook hands with Duplessis at his own door, after a silent walk from Mr. Arlington's, "the task you appear so anxious to undertake is full of peril, and, moreover, one that must not be entered upon from any motive unworthy of the son of my sainted sister. Forgive



me, Henri," he added, in a mild, deprecatory tone, in reply to his nephew's glance of fire, "it is for you that I chiefly fear."

Mr. Arlington died the day after this visit. The beauty, the multiplied perils which environed the bereaved young wife, excited, as we have seen, a tumult of emotions in the chivalrous breast of Duplessis—soon to be resolved into a fervent, devoted, but, as he instinctively felt, hopeless passion. He at once determined to save her, or to share her fate if unsuccessful. It was he who procured her passport and certificate of civism, and by his influence with Saint Just, he obtained for himself leave of absence from Carnot to proceed to the Gironde on affairs, as he stated, of family importance.

As intimated by the official guardian of the barrier, Duplessis rode on the outside of the diligence, protecting himself as he best might with his cloak from the inclemency of the weather. Throughout the entire journey he scrupulously abstained from intruding upon Mrs. Arlington's presence, save when her safety required that he should do so. That lady no doubt divined the nature of the emotions which influenced the conduct of the young officer—for quickly comes such knowledge—but however impossible she might feel it to reciprocate his sentiments, she could not feel the less grateful for services so hazardous and so unselfish. The heroic feeling which prompted a lover to

risk his life to facilitate the departure of the adored object from the country with which his own destinies were indissolubly bound up, could not but be gratefully appreciated by a generous, high-minded woman such as Mrs. Arlington. More than that was not in her power.

## II.

The journey was a long and anxious one. The shadow of the terrible régime enthroned in Paris enveloped the entire land of France. Suspicion, unquiet, terror, pervaded every town and village through which they passed. At Chateauroux, where the passengers were rudely questioned by a busy official, Mrs. Arlington's defective accent and irrepressible air of hauteur would unquestionably have caused her arrest, but for the bold bearing and ready assurance of the dragoon officer. At Limoges a similar peril was encountered, and with still greater difficulty evaded. Indeed, the nearer they approached the cities of the south, the thicker seemed to grow the air with exhalations of suspicion, hate, and fear. The names of Tallien, Isabeau, Madame de Fontenay, flew from mouth to mouth in every variety of emphasis and cadence. The guillotine, everybody agreed, was in full activity in Bordeaux, the cradle of the fated Girondists.

When the lumbering vehicle drew near that city, there were no other passengers inside than Mrs. Arlington and her servant and child. "Annette," said

she, after covering the lips, the forehead, the cheeks of her daughter with passionate kisses, "remember not to lose a moment should any misfortune befall me in obtaining a passage to England." The dreaded barrier was reached at last, and, at the invitation of the officer in command, Mrs. Arlington descended from the diligence; Duplessis' ready arm was instantly proffered; "Courage, madame," he whispered, as he led her gently, and with assumed confidence, towards the guard-room; "this danger passed, you have nothing more to fear."

Annette's papers were the first examined. There was no difficulty with her: she was personally known to several of the municipal soldiers, and, after replying to one or two unimportant questions, she passed forth.

"Marie Le Bon," said the officer, turning abruptly towards Mrs. Arlington, "your journey ends at Bordeaux. To-morrow, probably, you will appear before the representatives of the sovereign people. This night you pass in prison."

"What outrage is this?" exclaimed Duplessis, overwhelmed with consternation.

"Outrage, *mon capitaine!*" coolly replied the officer. "Nothing of the kind. Rigaud was not quite so credulous as you would have wished. Thanks to his researches, and the speed with which the agents of the Republic travel, I have now the honour of arresting Madame Arlington, foreign *intrigante*, and spy in the service of the detestable Pitt."

Expostulations, denials, intreaties, were alike useless, and the unfortunate lady, almost unconscious from excess of terror, was hurried off to prison. Duplessis accompanied her to the gate, and would have entered with her, but was thrust back by the guard. The officer who effected the arrest at the barrier, for all reply to his frenzied supplications, sourly intimated that, but for former services rendered to the Republic, and the friendship of St. Just and others, he would no doubt have been permitted the felicity not only of occupying the same prison, but of ascending the same scaffold, with the woman he had traitorously aided to escape.

On the fourth day from her arrest, Mrs. Arlington was placed for judgment before Isabeau and other satellites of the victorious Montagne. Duplessis was by her side, and, reckless of his own safety, inveighed with passionate vehemence against the injustice and cruelty that would sacrifice an innocent and helpless stranger to the groundless suspicions of a vindictive faction. Loud and ominous murmurs from the crowd which composed the audience frequently interrupted his audacious denunciations. Silence having at length been enforced, the helpless lady was, with brief form, doomed to the scaffold. She was then reconveyed to prison, to await the next day's *fournée*, or batch of victims; and Duplessis rushed from the hall of death in wild distraction. There was but one resource left, and that he must without delay invoke.

At this period a young Spanish lady, Dona Theresa Cabarus, otherwise Madame de Fontenay, reigned, by the influence of her dazzling beauty, supreme over the heart of Tallien, the dictator governing Bordeaux in the name of the Republic. All testimonies agree that this remarkable woman chiefly used her power to mitigate the ferocity of the decrees which would otherwise have decimated the devoted city. She was an angel of mercy to the unfortunate citizens of Bordeaux. According to the historian of the Girondists, "Tallien no longer desired power but that she might partake of it, grandeur but to raise her to it, glory but to cover her with it." This was the lady—"beautiful, brown woman," Carlyle calls her—whose letter, some months later, addressed to Tallien from the Paris dungeons, where she lay in hourly expectation of death, precipitated the fall of Robespierre, by determining Tallien to attack him in the Convention without delay.

With headlong haste Duplessis sought her residence. She was fortunately at home, having just returned from a drive; and, with the help of a considerable bribe to the domestic in waiting, he obtained immediate access to her presence. She was seated on a sofa, attired fantastically, but not unbecomingly for her style of face and figure, in a light, classical Grecian costume. Duplessis threw himself at the feet of the all-powerful beauty, and with earnest eloquence besought her aid.

Dona Theresa seemed affected by his passionate

appeal. She gently raised him, and motioned to a seat a few paces from her.

“This lady is very beautiful, I hear?”

“As the stars of heaven! As your own beauteous self!” added Duplessis with better tact, after a moment’s pause, “though of a different type of loveliness.”

“And you, captain, are a favoured wooer?”

Duplessis’ check flamed involuntarily to hear the lady, whose image was crowned in his imagination with a halo of purity and grace, so glibly alluded to by La Cabarus; and he coldly replied, “A stranger, madame, and a widow but of yesterday, could be to me, or to any other honourable man, but as a sister”

Madame de Fontenay coloured, and a slight frown contracted her lustrous forehead.

“After all, Captain Duplessis, if the lady be, as the tribunal has decided, an *intrigante*, an emissary of Pitt, it would ill become either of us, as sincere friends of our glorious Republic, to aid her escape from the doom she has so recklessly incurred.”

“Believe it not, madame,” exclaimed Duplessis, with wrathful energy. “She is as innocent as yourself of plotting against the Republic. She remained in Paris to smoothe the pillow of her dying husband; and who will not admit that that is woman’s highest, holiest duty?”

Awkward Duplessis! The ominous frown deepened, and a bright flush, certainly not arising from any plea-

surable feeling, tinted the clear olive of Dona Theresa's complexion.

"I am afraid, Captain Duplessis," said she, rising, as if to terminate the interview, "that I cannot successfully interpose in favour of this person."

"Not successfully interpose, madame!" cried the captain, painfully aware that he had committed some blunder, but, from his ignorance of the lady's history, not certain of what kind. "Have I not heard that you are omnipotent with him whose will is fate in this unhappy city? Can it be that such transcendent beauty could plead *in vain* to any being of earth's mould? Impossible! And will you, whom the inhabitants of Bordeaux, of all ranks, degrees, and opinions, pronounce with one voice to be as heroically tender in heart and disposition as you are radiantly beautiful in person, hesitate to exercise that all-subduing power in behalf of a helpless being of your own sex exposed to the cruelties of ruthless men?"

"Well, Citoyen Duplessis, replied Madame de Fontenay with a brilliant smile, "if you are not a successful lover, you, I am sure, deserve to be one. I will not disparage in your eyes the opinion the good people of Bordeaux have, you say, formed of me. The lady is safe, take my word for it, as if her foot already touched her native soil. Wait for me here. Representative Tallien resides but two doors off: I shall return in a few minutes."

Duplessis poured forth a torrent of incoherent thanks,

amidst which the senora gracefully sailed out of the apartment.

She was some time absent, and when she returned Duplessis, judging from the excited expression of her glowing countenance, feared that some difficulty had arisen which she had not been able to surmount.

"Alas, madame, all is, I fear, lost!"

"Reassure yourself, Monsieur Duplessis. There has been considerable difficulty, in consequence of the peremptory instructions from Paris regarding this lady; but I am not accustomed to sue in vain. Here is the order for Madame Arlington's liberation. It were well she departed at once. You do not accompany her?"

"No, generous lady, I remain to share the fortunes of the Republic. May He, madame, whom so many of us are too apt in these times to disregard, bless and reward you for this holy deed!"

A quarter of an hour afterwards, Mrs. Arlington was at liberty. As Duplessis, after leaving Madame de Fontenay's house, was hastening towards the prison, he was accosted by a man having the appearance of a tradesman, who informed him that Annette Vaudry had sailed a few hours previously for England. Important as was this intelligence, he was at the moment too much agitated to yield it the attention it deserved. Neither could he afterwards remember the man's name; nor, indeed, whether he had been told it. Mrs. Arlington, as well as himself, concluded he was a relative of Annette, deputed to communicate the news of her



departure; and the subject was with some effort dismissed from both their minds.

"Captain Duplessis," said Mrs. Arlington in a voice full of emotion, as she stood, late on the following evening, on the deck of a large fishing-vessel, hired at an enormous price—the produce of some jewels she had successfully concealed in her dress—"I have no words to express the deep gratitude I feel for your generous, your heroic kindness towards me; but if, when this unhappy war shall have terminated, you visit our shores" — The deathlike paleness of the features of Duplessis flushed with a sudden hectic, and he gazed with burning eyes upon her face. "If," she continued, slightly averting her head—"if you should then visit England, be assured that nothing that I or my relatives could do to testify our esteem, our gratitude, our respect"—

A deep sigh arrested her words, and she paused in painful embarrassment. The sudden light had faded from the young officer's face, and he was again deadly pale. The coldness of the lady's manner, more than her words, had chilled and disenchanted him.

"A dream, madame," he rejoined in a low, sad voice, "in which it were mere folly to indulge. My best hope is to forget, if forgetfulness be yet possible, the brief, bright vision which has glanced across my path. Farewell! May all good angels guard and bless you!" He jumped into the boat which was in waiting alongside, and was swiftly rowed ashore. A few minutes after-

wards, the fisher-vessel was gliding down the Garonne on its course to the Bay of Biscay, where it was hoped a British vessel might be met with which would take Mrs. Arlington on board ; but failing which, the master was bound, at all risks and hazards—so ran the bargain—to make for the nearest English port.

Duplessis watched the receding vessel as long as a speck of its white sails remained visible from the quiet, solitary shore. The scenery around, above him—the pale, silent town—the waving trees—the glancing river, gemmed with the diamond kisses of the glowing stars, reposed in the light, murmuring slumber of a bright southern winter night. Gradually it seemed that the calm beauty of the universe stole in upon and stilled the troubled beatings of his fevered heart and brain. But not from waving tree, nor glittering star-fire, nor glancing river, flowed that soothing calm. Its well-spring was in his own heart, and the holy peace of the exterior world but mingled with and heightened it. The poignant sense of pain and desolation which the lady's coldness, sweeping across his wounded spirit, had occasioned, yielded insensibly to the tranquillising, elevating consciousness of having fulfilled a great and holy duty. The day would come, was indeed, he felt, already dawning, when, like a hurt received by a veteran in some great battle, the agony of the wound forgotten, the scar would alone remain to testify that he had participated in the strife and victory. "Ay," he mentally exclaimed, as, on re-entering the town, a showy carriage, contain-

ing Tallien and the brilliant Dona Theresa, flashed by, "the time will come, triumphant lady, and that speedily—for this mad anarchy cannot long endure—when the false glare of a vain prosperity, by which you are now dazzled and misled, will vanish as suddenly as it has arisen, to be succeeded by black misfortune and disgrace. Then, O lady, will the deeds of mercy which you have scattered over your wild, eccentric path, alone remain to shine upon and cheer the else thick darkness. Be prodigal of them, lady, in these your days of power and pride, scatter them with unstinting hand; and then, when all else is lost to you, they will return and illumine with perennial radiance any lot, how dark soever, which may await you in this changing world."

### III.

The man who accosted Duplessis, and announced Annette Vaudry's departure for England, was Pierre Duclos, a working jeweller by ordinary profession, but, since the Revolution had practically abolished those appendages to luxury and *cullotism*, a zealous public-safety-committee-man, at forty sous a day. His wife, Marie Duclos, was a distant relative of Annette; and it was consequently in his house that she sought shelter for herself and the child confided to her. Her fair-speaking relatives easily obtained the confidence of the simple-hearted woman; and Pierre readily undertook the very difficult, as well as perilous task of negotiating

her passage to England. The gold and jewels with which she had been intrusted, Annette, in the guileless pride of her heart, exhibited as an unmistakable proof of the trust reposed in her by the foreign lady whom she so loved and mourned. The glittering treasure elicited one irrepressible flash of hell-fire from Duclos' eyes; and then, as if afraid of betraying himself, he jumped up from his chair, and hastily quitted the room.

The only surviving child of Pierre and Marie Duclos was a pretty, interesting girl of about nine years of age, named Valérie. In her was centred all of kindness of heart, all of healthy moral life which, long and impatiently-borne adversity, with other demoralising influences peculiar to the time, had left them. Valérie was the sole oasis which shone upon them from amidst the dreary sterility of the past, or relieved the bleak mistiness of the future—the only object which in this world or the next they contemplated with either joy, or hope, or fear. They had both—but the husband more especially, for in woman the divine instincts of faith and love are perhaps never wholly obliterated—accepted with sullen indifference the sad dogmas through which the fanatics of that period proffered to man a safe equality with brutes in lieu of a possibly-perilous immortality. These changes had been chiefly wrought in them since Annette had left Bordeaux. Had she been aware of her relatives' moral condition, she would in all probability have preferred taking up her abode with persons somewhat less untrammelled

with old-world prejudices than they. Pierre's look, when she displayed the money and precious stones, somewhat disquieted her, but the half-discovery came too late.

On the same night that Mrs. Arlington quitted the shores of France, and at about the same hour, Pierre and Marie Duclos sat down to a supper of much greater profusion than they had for several years been accustomed to. The husband ate heartily, but the wife, after one or two efforts to follow his example, pushed the piled plate from before her with an expression of impatience and disgust. The mind of Madame Duclos seemed, judging from her restless demeanour and changing countenance, strangely ill at ease. Presently she started up, and paced hurriedly up and down the apartment, pausing occasionally to listen at the door which shut in the stair leading to the room where slept Annette Vaudry, Valérie, and little Julia Arlington. She was rather a well-looking woman, of about six-and-thirty years of age; but the unquiet expression of her large, dark southern eyes too plainly intimated that peace dwelt not with the spirit which gleamed through them. At last she stopped in her agitated walk, hastily swallowed a draught of wine, sat down, and resumed the conversation her rising had interrupted in the same low undertone as before.

"What have you done with the—the *médecine*, Pierre?"

"Here it is, Marie. Believe me, it is the only genuine elixir for the woes of life, and silent, but unerring guide to the regions of eternal repose."

"Hush! Speak lower, Pierre. Annette is perhaps by this time awake. I will step and see."

Madame Duclos was some time gone, and when she re-entered the room her face was paler, her agitation even more violent, than before. Her husband again handed her wine, which she eagerly swallowed. It appeared to somewhat calm her, and she sat down.

"*Must* this be done, Pierre? Is there no hope for us save in this dreadful deed?"

"None—none—none!" replied Duclos gloomily. "Even this supper has been purchased with part of the money given me to secure her passage. And what is there in such an act that should startle us? The guillotine daily shears away, amid the applause of all good patriots, the lives of scores of persons, unoffending, harmless, and innocent as she"——

"You should see Valérie, Pierre," said the wife, interrupting his scarcely-heeded reply—"you should see Valérie asleep with that beautiful child embraced in her white arms. Their sweet lips touch each other, and they look in the bright moonlight like two angelic spirits sent down from heaven to teach all who look upon them the loveliness of innocence and truth. Oh Pierre! you and I were children once, as pure, as innocent as they, and now—— O God, to think that Valérie, perhaps through our example, may become as wretched and as lost as we!"

"Is it not mainly for the sake of Valérie," rejoined Duclos, "that we have resolved upon the deed which you now so strangely boggle at? Would you see *her* houseless, a beggar, cast perhaps a few years hence upon the streets"—

"No—no—no! But oh, Pierre, if but a part of what used to be told us in the abolished churches should, after all, prove true, and this crime-purchased wealth become not a blessing, but a curse, not only to us, but to her!"

"Mere superstitious folly, Marie. I hoped these dreams of a barbarous age had been banished from the minds of all reasonable beings. Do you think the enlightened patriots now occupied in regenerating France have not well weighed all such matters in their powerful minds? What said Tallien but yesterday at the banquet of Fraternity:—'The journey of life is over a vast plain teeming with flowers and fruits, for the delight and sustenance of the wayfarers, who, if they are wise, will gather and enjoy them as quickly as they may; for ever nearer and nearer to them gather the moving sands of fate and chance, which a little sooner or a little later will inevitably roll over them, and of their graves make new and smoother paths for succeeding generations—all destined, like their predecessors, to flutter for a while in the sunshine, and then sink into a dreamless slumber, from which no archangel's trump, as priests have fabled, shall ever waken them.'"

"Woe! woe! if it indeed be so, to the wayfarers—for those especially who are mothers, doomed never to behold again their little ones, untimely snatched from their embraces into eternal night, never, never, never to behold them more!"

"Ay, Marie, it is even so. The inscription placed over our new cemeteries—'DEATH IS AN ETERNAL SLEEP'—bids us enjoy"——

"The saddest, mournfullest sentence," interrupted Madame Duclos with tremulous tones, "ever written on the gate of death! It was not till the dread creed which it embodies had cankered itself into my heart and brain, that Marie and Edouard, though so long since laid in their quiet graves, really died to me"——

"Take another cup of wine, Marie," said Duclos, in his turn breaking in upon his partner's discourse: "you are not yourself to-night. There, that will do more to fortify you against imaginary terrors than all the preaching in the world. This philosophy, I say, this religion of men who refuse to be dupes, bids us enjoy, at every cost, the present life; commands us to seize, in the best way we can, all the means of happiness which chance may place within our reach. A golden opportunity now presents itself, and, thanks to our emancipation from childish prejudices, we shall seize it, and thus extricate ourselves, extricate Valérie, from the gulf of poverty into which we have fallen."

He paused, but, his wife not replying, he continued, still in the same low, cautious tones in which the con-



versation had been throughout maintained:—"The money entrusted to Annette, with the jewels, of the value of which you know I am a good judge, will amply suffice to establish us handsomely in business at Paris, as soon as order is restored, and then what but a life of comfort and luxury awaits us? Valérie, instead of being a miserable outcast, earning scanty bread, by miserable, ill-requited toil, will have her fine talents cultivated, and will shine forth an ornament of the circles she must otherwise serve for coarse food and insufficient raiment."

Madame Duclos' countenance gradually assumed, under the combined influence of the wine and her husband's sophistries, a less pallid and unquiet aspect. A silence of several minutes succeeded, broken at last by the wife—"She will not suffer much, Pierre?"

"Not at all: she will sleep, and not wake again—nothing more."

"Hélas! Only for Valérie: truly, as you say, this grinding burden of poverty—which the Revolution was to cure, but has not—becomes heavy and crushing in proportion to the number of loved ones who help to bear it. Pierre, promise me once more that Valérie shall never be corrupted—enlightened as I have been"—

"I do promise, Marie. Hark! you are called."

Madame Duclos rose and tottered towards the door. The summons was repeated, and she ascended the stairs. She soon reappeared.

"Annette is awake. The pain in her side is a little easier, but she wishes to take the medicine at once—in some wine."

"Good—excellent! Pour some into this cup. Morbleu! you waste it half: give it me."

"Pierre," said the wife in a hoarse whisper, "no harm must befall the child. We will rear it tenderly"——

"As you will; but be quick."

Madame Duclos took the cup mixed by her husband, and made two or three steps towards the door, then stopped irresolutely, and replaced it on the table.

"I cannot give it her, Pierre: I should betray myself."

"Then place it by her side; that will do. You do not need a light."

The hellish errand was at last accomplished. The half-slumbering woman swallowed the potion, and then, murmuring thanks to the wretch, who watched her from the half-opened door, sank back upon the pillow. Was it fancy, or did Valérie's soft eyes unclosed, and for an instant rest upon her guilty, trembling mother? Duclos and his wife crept stealthily—as if they feared the very sound of their footsteps might betray them—to bed, to sleep, if sleep be possible.

The same silver glory of the night which diffused a healing calm over Duplessis' wounded spirit, and shed its holy, sanctifying light upon the chamber where Lu-

nocence and Death reposed, streamed into the room where Remorse and Crime crouched, shuddered, dreamed, only to light it up with a fiercer, brighter terror, in which shadows, woven of the murderers' labouring brain—indistinct indeed, but terrible—waved their serpent-hair, and shook their fiery whips! Oh, most unhappy pair! What if the sleep ye fondly deem eternal be broken by such dreams as these!

But the terrors of the night are past. It is broad, bright day: and the all-seeing heavens blab not to mortal ears of the deeds they have looked upon. The widowed Mrs. Arlington is fairly on her way to her distant, unchilded home: Duplessis is off to the northern frontier, and will soon be engaged in death-grapples with the foes of France: the deep waters of the Garonne float over the corpse of Annette Vaudry. Surely, then, thou enriched, triumphant Duclos, mayest safely laugh at the notion that there exists a Power capable of reuniting those wide-sundered strands, and weaving of them thy web of destiny!

#### IV.

Nine years of fratricidal strife had passed heavily away when the peace, or rather the truce of Amiens, afforded the wearied, trampled world a few months' breathing-time. Mrs. Arlington had remarried, and was now Lady Ormsby. Duplessis had attained the rank of general. Time had swept over both of them

with healing wings, assuaging the mother's grief for her child, supposed to have perished with Annette Vaudry at sea, and filling the aching void in the soldier's heart with a new idol—glory! But what had the strong hours done for the Duclos family?—what had the seasons in their change brought *them*?

All, it should seem, that, in the dark days of adversity, they had pined and sinned for—competence, wealth, luxury; the consideration and esteem of the world; a respected position in society—all these they possessed. M. Duclos, the goldsmith and jeweller of the Rue Vivienne, was recognised by the *élite* of the Paris *bourgeoisie* as a thoroughly respectable citizen; his wife as a pattern of grave, conjugal propriety: and his only child, the pretty light-hearted Valérie—already contracted to Auguste le Blanc, eldest son of the Sieur le Blanc of the Boulevard des Italiens, one of the richest notaries of Paris—as the most charming and amiable of daughters. Happiness, then, if happiness consist in the things they so eagerly desired, is obtained, however foully played for. One would suppose so; and yet it can scarcely be content and peace that have so early changed the thick, black tresses of the wife to scanty gray, and stamped those heavy furrows on the husband's haggard face! Why, too, do they start with such quick terror if strangers suddenly accost them? Do they tremble lest the Garonne should give up its dead—for how else can accusation reach them? “These fears,” they continually repeat

to each other, "are childish and absurd. No eye but ours looked upon the deed; and the body of the victim has been long since resolved into the elements. Thus impenetrably shielded from retribution, why should we permit ourselves to be haunted by such shadowy terrors?" Why, indeed? There appeared no logical reason that it should be so; and yet those shadowy terrors, illogical as they may be, all their fine reasoning could not dissipate nor scare away. They, on the contrary, daily, nightly grew and strengthened; sat at table with them, accompanied them even in their noontide walks, crept with them to bed, suggesting such fantasies! . . . Oh, Duclos, what were the infictions of toil, hunger, cold, compared to the tortures of such nights as these!

The love of both father and mother for their graceful Valérie had also grown and strengthened, until it amounted almost to idolatry. The only happiness they knew—and that but fitful and evanescent—was in contemplating hers. Scrupulously had they concealed from her the creed of despair by which their own minds had been dwarfed and perverted—their own lives stained and debased. Valérie at least should have a future, if but an ideal one. Existence should not be with her an avowedly objectless journey ending in a tomb. So natively good and kind was the disposition of Valérie, that even the doting indulgence which anticipated and gratified every whim or wish she formed failed of corrupting her unselfish nature. Gentle, pious,

affectionate, gay-hearted, she shed a light of gladness around her which mitigated, if it could not subdue, the gloom which—Valérie's only grief—constantly enshrouded her parents.

The deep tenderness and love which Valérie had always manifested for the beautiful orphan, who had dwelt with them since the sad death of Annette Vaudry, was one of the most amiable traits of her character. Julia or Julie, as she was called—she passed with the world as Valérie's cousin—who was now more than twelve years of age, gave promise of a beauty as radiant and exquisite as that of her mother, and her talents for drawing, music, even dancing—that apparently intuitive faculty of Frenchwomen—were far superior to her own, but not one emotion of jealous inferiority ruffled the placid bosom of Valérie. On the contrary, one of her chief pleasures was to dilate upon the fresh graces and beauties which, according to her, were daily springing up and expanding in her beloved companion and protégée. Happy was it for Julie to be so loved by one so potent in the household as Valérie. Both husband and wife, but Pierre Duclos especially, instinctively dreaded and disliked her. “How,” he would frequently mutter—“how can we hope for peace whilst that living memorial of the past haunts us with her accusing presence? If Valérie were not so bound up in her”—And then evil thoughts would flit across his brain, analogous to the dark patches which hurry athwart a menacing sky, harbingers and portions of

the thick blackness which will soon shut out the heavens. The suggestions of his clouded mind did not as yet, fortunately, harden into shape and action; and Julie, nestled and sheltered in the arms of Valérie, slept in peace and safety.

Julie had been told by Valérie that she was the daughter of English parents of high degree, one of whom—so Annette Vaudry had said—was buried at Père la Chaise; and the other had perished by the guillotine at Bordeaux. One of the favourite haunts of the two friends was to that picturesque burial-garden, to shed tears and scatter *immortelles* upon an unmarked grave, which, from certain evidence extracted from the good-natured guardians of the place—not perhaps of much value in a court of law, but more than sufficient for minds willing to be deceived—they believed to be the earth's resting-place of Julie's father, Mr. A. More than the first letter of his name they knew not. If Annette had ever mentioned the name to Valérie, she had forgotten it. Monsieur and Madame Duclos of course affected equal ignorance. Indeed, any allusion to the subject was rigorously, and, even to Valérie, menacingly interdicted. The initial letter was found on the fly-leaf of an English Book of Common Prayer taken out of Annette's box, at the foot of some tender lines evidently addressed to her infant daughter by Julie's mother, previous to her setting out upon what they deemed had proved her fatal journey to Bordeaux. Those lines, now almost oblite-

rated by frequent tears—of little consequence, as every letter was deep graven upon Julie's heart and memory—were subscribed "Julia A." The brilliant castles in the air that Valérie would build for her young friend on returning from these votive excursions! How some day, now that peace was proclaimed, and in some way not very distinctly mapped out, Julie's grand relations were to be discovered. Julie, of course, proving to be one of the very grandest of grand Miladis, possessed, like all Miladis, according to juvenile French notions, of millions upon millions of guineas—those all-powerful guineas with which the terrible Pitt so cruelly beat and sank the French navies, and, worse than all, the gentle Valérie sighed to think, strove to blow up the First Consul—besides innumerable castles all now desolate, and waiting to fire off all their guns on their lost mistress's arrival. Then how, after Julie had taken possession, and been crowned a Miladi in Westminster Hall, or St. Paul's church—Valérie did not pique herself upon precise historical accuracy—she would return to delightful France, and build a splendid château near Paris, so as to be able to reside near that city of delights at least six months out of every year; and ultimately—there could be no doubt upon this point—marry the handsome son of the brave French officer— Ah, if they only knew *his* name!—who, according to Annette, so gallantly, but, alas! so vainly, risked his life to save that of her mother! Such were Valérie's innocent



and unselfish day-dreams of Julie's future lot. On returning home one evening from this favourite walk, they found Monsieur and Madame Duclos in a state of great agitation; and the first address to them was a harsh command that, for the present at least, Julie should on no account leave the house without either Monsieur or Madame Duclos' especial permission, nor even enter the front shop. She must confine herself strictly to the back apartments and garden. This strange prohibition, dictated, they hinted, solely in Julie's interest, Valérie warmly but ineffectually remonstrated against, as an act of unjustifiable caprice and cruelty. For once her parents were deaf even to *her* pleadings; and, accompanied by Julie, she withdrew in sorrowful indignation to her chamber.

No wonder that Monsieur and Madame Duclos exhibited symptoms of unusual alarm and agitation. For some time past, the daily more and more striking resemblance of Julie to her mother—they had both seen her when before the revolutionary committee at Bordeaux—had given form and substance to the undefined terrors by which they were inexorably pursued; and an incident which occurred about half an hour previous to the return of Valérie and her companion from their evening walk had, like a flash of lightning suddenly revealing to a benighted traveller the abyss upon which he is advancing, placed in an instant before their eyes the extent and imminence of the peril by which they were menaced. General

Duplessis was returned to Paris, and had twice, on horseback, paced slowly before their shop, gazing in as he passed with an expression which sent their blood in tumultuous eddies through their veins. This officer, who, Duclos was aware, had been made prisoner by the English, but had strangely obtained his almost immediate release by exchange, had, several years before, made minute inquiries at Bordeaux, doubtless by the instigation of Madame Arlington, and had, in consequence, traced him to Paris, and there called upon him for explanations relative to the sailing of Annette Vaudry for England. The answers, long before prepared, had been apparently satisfactory; but what if the general—whom the peace had again brought to Paris, and who, being on the First Consul's staff, would doubtless remain there—chanced to see Julie? That, indeed, were ruin! Great numbers of English visitors were also crowding to France, and was it not probable, nay, almost certain, that Madame Arlington would come over and personally institute a more minute and searching investigation? And if Julie were seen and interrogated, what would become of the plausible story he had told of her embarkation with Annette in Jacques Bazire's vessel, fortunately lost with all hands on board in the very nick of time? The danger was palpable, imminent, and must, at all hazards and sacrifices, be provided against. In the meantime, one evident precaution suggested itself: Julie must be strictly confined within the house, at all

events until a renewal of the war—not a very remote probability, according to generally-accredited rumour—should again chase the English from the soil of France, and recall Duplessis to the frontiers.

The conference of Duclos and his wife was that night long and gloomy, and bitter words of reproach and recrimination, now no unusual occurrence, passed between them. “Safety alone in another crime, does he say?” murmured Madame Duclos as she left the room. “Alas! alas! a fresh serpent wreathed about the heart will yield peace as readily as a new crime will safety!”

“Oh, why do you weep, *chère mère*?” said Valérie, embracing her mother, who, thinking she slept, was bending over her in tearful agony. “Why, always when Julie and I sleep together, do you come in, separate us gently, but with averted head, as if you could not bear to see us slumbering in each other’s arms, and then silently weep, as if your very heart would break? Often, often, mother, have I watched you whilst pretending to sleep. Oh, mother, tell me, tell your own Valérie, what hidden grief it is that so disquiets you?”

“Am I not soon to lose you, Valérie?” replied the agitated woman: “is not that a cause for tears?”

“Lose me, mother! Ah, now you are jesting. Is, then, the Boulevard des Italiens so far from the Rue Vivienne? And must not a long twelvemonth elapse before even that slight separation can take place? You, too, kind and dear mother, who have permitted Auguste

to solicit his father, because you think your health is failing, to abridge that delay one-half. Oh no, it is not that! Forgive me, dear mother, if I offend you, for you have often bidden me never to mention the subject, but I remember that when Annette Vaudry came to our house in the Faubourg of Bordeaux, that"—

"What, what do you remember?" gasped Madame Duclos as her daughter paused, frightened at the wild expression of her mother's face.

"Only, dear mother—oh, do not look so strangely at me, I do not mean to offend you; but I remember how poor, how very poor we then were, and I have sometimes thought that father may not now be so rich as he is supposed to be."

"Nonsense, my child: your father is even richer than he is believed to be. Now, love, go to sleep: good-night;" and, kissing her daughter fervently, the mother left the room.

Valérie, as she sank back with a sigh upon her pillow, slightly disturbed by the motion the sleeping Julie, who turned murmuringly towards her. "How beautiful she is!" thought Valérie; "and as true and gentle as beautiful. But, ah me! I fear neither father nor mother loves her as she deserves to be loved; and when I am gone, perhaps—— At all events I shall be always near her; and Auguste says, if she is unhappy, she shall come and live with us. Dear Auguste!"—and, with the thoughts suggested by that name mantling about her heart, the gentle maiden sank to sleep.

## V.

Time wore on; the truce of Amiens was rapidly drawing towards a close, and Duclos' long ill-humour was sensibly abating, when one day, just as he was leaving his counting-house to partake of dinner, an English lady and gentleman, evidently persons of condition, entered the shop, accompanied by General Duplessis. "Is the master of this establishment within?" demanded that officer of one of the assistants. He was answered in the affirmative. "Then have the goodness to inform him that General Duplessis wishes to see him."

Lucky for Duclos was it that he had arisen from his seat, and approached the window overlooking the shop, just as the strangers entered. He thus obtained a few minutes' time to rally his startled energies. He recognised Julie's mother in an instant. Time had not in the slightest degree dimmed that brilliant loveliness; and the shade of melancholy regret which rested changefully upon it, but increased its fascination. Duclos intuitively guessed the errand of his ominous visitors. "They had doubtless being making renewed inquiries at Bordeaux. Yet what had he to fear? What evidence could be brought against him? The jewels had been all long since reset in a manner to defy recognition, and disposed of. Detection by that means was impossible. Why, then, need he disquiet himself? There was no cause for apprehension - none, positively none, if Julie

could be kept out of sight. There lay the peril: he had long felt so; and, but for Valérie and his panic-stricken wife, would have long since "——

The entrance of the shopman to announce the general's message interrupted his hurried soliloquy. "Tell him I will wait on him immediately," replied Duclos, without turning his face to the man. He then went to a cupboard, poured out, with trembling hands, a large glass of spirits, and hastily swallowed it. Colour came gradually back to his pallid cheek, and he walked with tolerably steady steps into the shop.

"We wish to speak with you privately, Monsieur Duclos," said the general.

Duclos immediately led the way to his counting-house. He placed three chairs for Lord and Lady Ormsby and the general, and remained standing himself, as if respectfully awaiting their commands.

"Monsieur Duclos," said the general with brusque military curtness, "you told me, when I called on you three years ago, that Annette Vaudry, with this lady's daughter, embarked at Bordeaux for England in Jacques Bazire's vessel, which, past question, you well knew foundered in the bay. Now we have every reason to believe that this story of yours is absolutely false."

"False, General Duplessis!"

"False, Monsieur Duclos! You told me you paid the large sum agreed upon for the passage-money to Jacques Bazire the day before he sailed. Now his

wife persists that she never heard of any negotiation by any person with her husband for such a purpose; that when he sailed he had no intention whatever of going to England; and that, moreover, the stores on board were nothing like sufficient for such a voyage."

"The negotiation, general, was necessarily, as you must be aware, strictly private and confidential. Besides, Jacques Bazire was, if possible, to put his passengers on board a cruiser in the bay, then covered with them."

"Plausible, plausible, Monsieur Duclos," returned the general, with the same rude curtness, "but not at all convincing to me, especially accompanied as it is by that nervous twitching at the corners of your mouth."

"General, you insult me."

"Perhaps so. Moreover, Bazire's family persist that, if he had received such a sum of money as you say was paid to him, they must have known of it. He would not have taken it with him to sea: it is absurd to suppose so; and his family, at his death, were in a state of poverty almost amounting to destitution. You perceive, Monsieur Duclos, that a mystery hangs over the affair which you would do wisely to clear up; otherwise"—

At this moment the door conducting to the inner apartment opened, and Madame Duclos, utterly ignorant of *who* it was detaining her husband from his dinner, entered to remind him that it had been for

some time waiting for him. "Pierre," she began, with the handle of the half-opened door in her hand, "the sooner you can"—when her eyes fell upon Lady Ormsby and General Duplessis. The words died on her tongue, and she stood gazing upon them in terrified amazement.

"What is there in this lady to scare you so, good woman?" said the general, after a minute's pause.

Madame Duclos did not answer, but her bosom heaved tumultuously, and she caught at the door-post with her disengaged left hand for support.

"Marie," said Duclos, hurriedly approaching her, himself shaking with nervous terror, "I will come to you almost immediately."

"Yes—yes—yes," gasped his wife, partially recovering herself. "I know—I understand—I"—And, with a great effort, she tottered back into the passage, closing the door after her.

"Very singular behaviour of your wife this, Monsieur Duclos," said General Duplessis, eyeing him sternly.

Duclos, after a few moments, stammered something about his wife being subject to fits; unheeded, however, by the general, who was conversing with Lord and Lady Ormsby in low and earnest tones. Duclos stood leaning with his arms upon his desk in a tumult of conflicting terrors.

"Monsieur Duclos," said General Duplessis, turning towards him, "it is right I should inform you that it is this lady's impression, I should rather say her *hope*,



that Annette Vaudry, aided by yourself, has concealed herself, with the child confided to her, in order to be able to retain the very large amount of property imprudently intrusted to her. If this be so, I am desired to say that, if the child be only restored, no harm shall happen to either of you, no question be asked respecting that property; and that a further large sum shall be paid *you*, if, by your means, the recovery of Mademoiselle Arlington should be effected."

Duclos was about to reply with renewed assurance—perceiving, as he instantly did, by the nature of the proposition, that neither Lady Ormsby nor the general had fallen upon the right scent—when a voice was heard from the inner apartments calling for assistance to Madame Duclos. It was Julie's voice; and at the same moment a light step was heard swiftly approaching along the passage towards the counting-house. Should it be Julie! Duclos shook like an aspen, and his very hair seemed to lift itself with sympathetic terror. The door opened: it was Valérie! The reaction of his blood flushed his face purple. "Well—well," he gasped.

"Mamma has fallen down in a fit, and blood is gushing from her mouth. Oh come at once, papa."

Lord and Lady Ormsby rose immediately. "We shall see you again to-morrow, Monsieur Duclos," said General Duplessis. The three terrible visitors then withdrew, and Duclos, leaning heavily on his daughter's arm, tottered to his wife's assistance.

The next fortnight was spent in vain attempts on the part of General Duplessis and Lord and Lady Ormsby to frighten or bribe Duclos into compliance with their wishes. The jeweller had recovered his momentarily-shaken assurance, and, confident in their inability to bring any tangible accusation against him, defied alike menaces and prayers. He even threatened in his turn to prosecute them for defamation, should either presume to whisper anything against his fair fame. Duclos was the more emboldened in this course, from the certainty that now existed of the immediate rupture of the truce of Amiens, which must necessarily relieve him at once of the presence, not only of Lord and Lady Ormsby, but of the far more formidable Duplessis. Be not so jubilant, O Duclos; the shadow of death, in which you have so long walked, still points, be assured, with its unerring finger, towards a felon's bloody grave!

"I quite agree with you, Henri," said M. de Liancourt, to whom his nephew had been relating, during dinner, the substance of his fruitless interviews with the jeweller of the Rue Vivienne. "Much graver suspicion than Lady Ormsby seems to entertain attaches to this Duclos, notwithstanding his affectedly-indignant protestations and plausibilities. I have seen the daughter of whom you speak at Le Blanc's, a patient of mine. His son, Auguste, is, I believe, contracted to her. She is a fair, graceful girl, of something more, perhaps, than eighteen years of age."

"Yes."

"She was no doubt living with them at Bordeaux and, if so, must have seen and probably conversed with Annette Vaudry."

"If foul play has been, as I suspect, practised towards the woman, that girl is, I am certain, ignorant of it. Her brow is too candid, too open and unclouded"——

"That I do not at all dispute, Henri," interrupted the uncle; "but she might unconsciously, if adroitly questioned, make revelations that would perhaps put us on the right track. Depend upon it, if Annette Vaudry was destroyed for the sake of the property entrusted to her, this young woman, then a girl of about nine years of age, must have been hoodwinked by some story or other, differing in all probability from that which these people would palm off upon you and Lord and Lady Ormsby."

"Possibly; but how to question her?"

"Leave that to me. I was at Le Blanc's yesterday, and I remember hearing that Valérie Duclos was to be there to-morrow, to witness the troops file past to the review in the Champ de Mars. I will drop in, *par hasard* as it were, and seize a favourable opportunity of putting a few leading questions."

"Do so! and yet it seems hardly fair to render a child instrumental in her parent's destruction."

"Nonsense! Consult the jurisconsults upon the subject, and you will alter your opinion. But to

change the topic: is it certain that war is about to recommence?"

"No question of it. The sword of Marengo will cut the knot which double-tongued diplomacy but the more entangles."

"*Peut-être!* But the sword, you will please to remember, is also double-edged, not unfrequently smiting the smiter. Did you notice—but of course you did, for with all your philosophy you see, when she is present, nobody else—how the eyes of the proud English beauty flashed with indignation and defiance as the First Consul poured forth his fiery denunciations of England to Lord Whitworth? No chance for you there, Henri, even were she not married to Lord Ormsby."

"Perfectly true, De Liancourt, and happily, for all you may fancy, I have long ceased even to wish that it were otherwise. The enthusiastic passion with which she inspired me, and but for which I doubt that the star of the Legion of Honour would now glitter on my breast"——

"It is true, then," interrupted the physician, "what Murat told Josephine the other day, that a lady's glove used to occupy the place now covered by that new bauble?"

"Perhaps so, though Murat was but a puppy to babble of it there. But what I would say is, that the delirious passion I once felt is sobered down to a sentiment of calm admiration and respect, illuminated and

sanctified by the proud consciousness that I once rendered her, at some hazard to myself, an essential service ; a service, however, which she more than repaid by her prompt and successful exertions, through her influential relatives, to extricate me from an English prison, and restore me to freedom and a brilliant career in life."

"I am glad to hear you speak so, Henri, for I was afraid the wound cankered still. You reaped the reward of a generous action ; and I firmly believe, though I don't go to church quite so often as I might, that there are few seeds cast upon this field of time which do not bring forth fruits, each after its kind, in due season. I greatly respect the lady myself ; and we must endeavour, short as the time is, to discover and restore the lost child. *En attendant*, it is time for you to be off to Malmaison, and for me to attend to my *clientèle*.

## VI.

The gay city of Paris awoke the next day in the clear splendour of a brilliant morning of spring, and the feelings of the excited people were in harmonious accord with the delightful season of flowers and sunshine. The streets, the boulevard, the squares, as the day wore on, flashed in the varied splendour of military pomp and pride. There was to be a grand review of troops in the Champ de Mars by the First Consul, followed by a ball in the evening at the

Tuileries ; and brilliant equipages, crowded with bebies of fair women, and mounted officers, fiery-hot with speed, as if bound upon a world's deliverance, dashed incessantly along in all the glory of lace, feathers, and stars. France was again about to cast her brilliant and victorious sword into the balance wherein trembled the destinies of nations ; and who could doubt that a long career, thick strewed with wreaths and stars, and ending with a conqueror's diadem, awaited the as-yet-uncrowned chief of glorious France ?

The British Embassy had received their passports, and were hastily preparing for departure. Lord and Lady Ormsby intended to journey in Lord Whitworth's suite ; especially as there were already whispers abroad of a design, afterwards carried into effect, of arresting the numerous English persons then in France, and detaining them as prisoners of war. General Duplessis had made his final adieus to Lord Ormsby and his disconsolate lady, fervently promising at the same time that no effort should be spared to effect the discovery of the lost child.

The sunshine and joyaunce of the day penetrated and lighted up with strange gaiety the sombre abode of the Ducloses. Both husband and wife appeared in unwonted spirits, almost cheerful indeed. The danger, long dreaded, had been met, and successfully evaded. Lady Ormsby had either already left Paris, or was immediately about to do so, her suspicions apparently removed, and convinced, it should seem, of the fruitless

ness of any further search for her daughter : Duplessis, attached to the Consul's staff, would leave the next day for the Grand Army : there would now be ample leisure to devise some mode of safely disposing of the sole source of future danger—Julie. Valérie would soon be happily married, and then, all necessary precautions taken, they might hope to sleep again at nights, and really enjoy the wealth they had purchased at so dear a price.

"Quick, Marie," exclaimed Duclos, addressing his wife, "this is a great holiday for us as well as for the rest of the world. The carriage will be at the door in a few minutes. A few rides in such glorious weather will soon restore your strength. The evil day, Marie, is past. This Providence, whose mysterious fingers you began to fear were busy sharpening the axe for our destruction, has, you see, either bungled the business, *or*, which is more probable, has never heard of our little affair!"

Madame Duclos sighed, and changed the conversation to a more agreeable topic.

"Valérie wishes to take Julie with her to the Le Blancs. There is no danger, Pierre, now in complying with her wish. The lady is as good as gone, and Duplessis will be too busy to heed anything but the manœuvres and the Consul."

"*Peste !*" exclaimed Duclos, in an irritated tone ; "I wish Valérie had not taken such a fancy to that girl."

At this moment Valérie, charmingly dressed in

white, and her hair, as became a youthful *fiancée*, jewelled with pale spring flowers, entered the room with the elastic step and joyous aspect of youth and happy love. The parents looked with delighted eyes upon their graceful child. No wonder Auguste le Blanc should so eagerly petition for an earlier day than had been at first named for his union with that fair girl, so lustrous in her young joy and innocence !

“What do you say, *mon père* ; that you wish I did not love so much our beautiful Julie ? Ah, you cannot be serious !”

Pierre Duclos kissed the fair, clear brow of his daughter, and, evading her question, told her she might take Julie to the Le Blancs with her.

“Thanks, thanks, dear papa ! O jour trois fois heureux ! Adieu, *maman* ;” and, embracing her mother, the light-hearted girl flew up stairs again, to hurry and assist Julie in her toilet.

The pomp and circumstance of the grand review had passed and repassed before M. Le Blanc’s house, and the shadows of the trees which dotted the Boulevard had begun sensibly to lengthen, when M. de Liancourt, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, quietly glided into the apartment, and mingled with the gay party assembled there. Valérie and Auguste le Blanc were seated on an ottoman, somewhat apart from the rest of the company. There was a roseate blush on the maiden’s cheek, and her lips were parted



with a gratified smile ; for her ear had been drinking in her lover's felicitations on having at last obtained his parents' consent to their more speedy union. Suddenly Julie, who was standing at the window, turned round and called Valérie to witness the passage of the First Consul, who, surrounded by a brilliant staff, was galloping towards the Tuileries. The action gave M. de Liancourt, who had been admiring the graceful elegance of her youthful figure, and the perfect Grecian outline of her head, a full view of her features ; and he started with uncontrolled surprise, " It is doubtless, then, as we suspected," he mentally exclaimed. " Annette has been sacrificed, and the child by some caprice preserved ! "

The company began to separate, and De Liancourt, feeling he had not a moment to lose, approached Valérie.

" Paris, mademoiselle, has exhibited a brilliant spectacle to-day."

" *Magnifique !* No place in the world, Auguste says, could present scenes so imposing and so gorgeous ! "

" Auguste is right. In only one feature is this glorious Paris, in my opinion, deficient : the river is scarcely worthy of the splendid quays and bridges which border and span it. If one of our southern rivers, the flashing Garonne for instance, were substituted for the Seine, Paris would be perfect ! "

" The Garonne ! Oh yes—how well I remember

that glorious river. I am, you know, a native of the Gironde—of the immediate neighbourhood of Bordeaux, in fact."

"Of Bordeaux! Then perhaps, my dear young lady," rejoined M. de Liancourt in a low, caressing voice, "either you or your parents may be able to give me some information respecting a person I am in search of, and of whom that young lady," pointing to Julie, "forcibly reminds me. This way, if you please, mademoiselle. Don't be jealous, Auguste; I will not detain your charming mistress more than a minute or two."

"If I am not greatly mistaken, my dear Mademoiselle Duclos," continued M. de Liancourt in the same silvery, insinuating tone, as soon as they had reached a recess at the further end of the apartment, "you can afford me information which will greatly increase the marriage-portion your worthy father means to bestow upon you. That young lady, Julie you call her, do you know anything of her parents?"

"Alas, yes, monsieur! Her mother, an English lady, an *employée* of the terrible Pitt, was guillotined at Bordeaux. Her father died in Paris, and was buried, Annette told me, at Père la Chaise."

"Annette Vaudry?"

"The same: you knew her then?"

"Yes. What has become of her?"

Valérie hesitated. Her father and mother had solemnly enjoined her never to speak of Annette, or

she would endanger not only their safety, but that of Julie, who might be seized, and perhaps sacrificed, as the child of a foreigner convicted of crimes against the Republic. For the same reason she knew her father had privately interred the body of Annette. But the "days of the Terror" had been long since past; and people now said that the Republic itself was about to be quietly got rid of. There could be no danger now; and if dear Julie could be benefited by any revelation she might make, restored to her relatives maybe, just, too, at the time when her own marriage would deprive the beautiful orphan of her best friend——

"Why do you hesitate, my dear young lady?" said De Liancourt soothingly, and as if he had divined her thoughts. "Would you not, if you could, promote the interests of your young friend?"

"Oh yes, indeed. Well, then, Annette Vaudry died at our house in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux. Mamma gave her some medicine, which she desired should be obtained, and poor Annette never woke again after taking it. I slept with Julie in the same room, and chanced to wake up just as mamma had placed it by her side. My father buried her privately, for fear of those terrible revolutionists."

"Is this all you know, mademoiselle?" said the physician with averted head and in an agitated voice.

"Yes: except that in Julie's *livre de prières*—an English book—there are some lines addressed to her by her mother, signed Julia A."

"Enough, mademoiselle," said De Liancourt, turning again towards Valérie: "I am satisfied. You will be rejoiced to hear that I have every reason to believe I know the family to which your friend belongs. It is a very distinguished one. But as, mademoiselle, I *may* be mistaken, it will be better, in order that no possibly false expectations may arise, not to mention the matter at present either to her or to Monsieur Duclos. Adieu, mademoiselle; I shall see you again perhaps this evening, at all events to-morrow."

"The infamous wretches!" murmured De Liancourt as he reached the street. "I pity this poor girl though sincerely; but it cannot be helped. Let me see: Miladi Ormsby and her husband are, I daresay, gone by this time; and where the deuce to see Duplessis now? *Allons*, if I can find nobody else, a commissary of police is always to be had. But I doubt even now that we shall be able to convict the miscreants."

Valérie was overjoyed that her dear Julie would be restored at last to her country and friends. Her own happiness rendered her doubly generous. The contrast between her own felicity and Julie's adverse lot would no longer chequer and rebuke her joy in her own prospects. And what gladsome tidings she had to communicate to her parents! The consent of the Le Blancs to her more speedy union with Auguste, which she knew they both, but her mother especially, so much desired; and the discovery—for Valérie would not en-

certain, for all Monsieur de Liancourt's warning, any doubt on the subject—of Julie's relatives. Rich milords no doubt, else why had an addition to her marriage-portion been hinted at? What a day of joy!—what motives for thanksgiving! “Auguste,” she added aloud, her sweet eyes humid with emotion, and placing her hand frankly in his, “we will to church at early service to-morrow morning; it is quietest then, and my heart, *bien aimé*, is full.”

“When Valérie and Julie arrived at home, neither Monsieur nor Madame Duclos, nor any of the household, had returned from the Champ de Mars. They were both tired, Julie especially, and Valérie proposed that they should rest themselves, before changing their dresses, on the *canapé* or large sofa in the alcove at the end of the *salon*. She wished her mother to see the rich white Brussels lace veil Madame le Blanc had presented her with, previous to taking it off. They lay down on the *canapé*, Julie encircled in the arms of Valérie, and her drooping head reclined upon her shoulder, Valérie having first drawn and carefully closed the thick curtains, which, as is frequently the case in French houses, divided the alcove—occasionally used as a bedroom—from the rest of the apartment. “They will think we are not returned, *chère* Julie; and we shall afford them an agreeable surprise in more senses than one.” Julie soon fell asleep in her friend's embrace, and Valérie contemplated with tender admiration the sweet features of the beautiful girl,

kindled into almost seraphic loveliness by the golden sunset, which streamed in through the open casement. "If papa and mamma could see her now," she murmured, "surely they must love her and treat her kindly when I am gone, should Monsieur de Liancourt's anticipation prove illusive. I will show her to them as she is."

## VII.

For about half an hour no sound was heard in the house but the soft lullaby sung by the gentle and happy Valérie over the angel sleeping in her arms. At length a key turned harshly in the lock of the front door: Valérie knew it was her parents, as the servants of the establishment would enter by the back-way, and she instantly ceased her song, the last she was ever destined to pour forth on earth! Monsieur and Madame Duclos, having carefully refastened the door behind them, slowly ascended the stairs, and entered the salon.

"They are not returned," said Duclos, in a querulous voice, as he supported his wife's feeble steps towards a couch. "Sit down, and let us talk over affairs quietly, now that we have a few minutes to ourselves. In the first place, what a dusty, scorching, altogether vexatious day it has been!"

"How Duplessis glared upon us, Pierre, as he rode by!"

"He did. There's mischief in that man; but I tell you, Marie—and some decision *must* be come to—the only instrument which he can wield to our injury is that wretched Julie. Would that she were in the same grave with Annette Vaudry!"

"Oh, Pierre, would that I, would that you, had never entered the path which has conducted us to this fearful strait! That we had died, if need be, of hunger and cold, rather than have purchased this living death by that inhuman deed!"

"The past, Marie, cannot be recalled."

"Alas no! but it may perhaps be partially even yet atoned for. Let the lady have her child, and this miserable wealth too, if she will, which neither cheers, nor warms, nor helps us."

"Why do you persist, woman," cried Pierre Duclos fiercely, "in these eternal and unavailing lamentations? They weary me. After all, it was your hand that administered the poison to Annette, not mine."

"And do *you* reproach me, Pierre, with the crime which you suggested, counselled, urged me to commit? Did you not mix the fatal cup, and, spite"—

"Silence, woman! Hark! some one is knocking at the front street door!"

They paused to listen, and, as they did so, the curtain which shrouded the alcove suddenly opened in the centre, and Valérie, pale as despair, rigid as death, stood before them!

Had the earth suddenly yawned beneath their feet,

and displayed the nethermost abyss, the horror of that moment could not have been surpassed. There stood glaring at each other those three unfortunates—stunned, overwhelmed, conscious only that a universe had crumbled at the feet of each, and that all for which they had lived, toiled, sinned, hoped, and loved, was lost! lost! lost! for ever lost!

“Valérie!” at length gasped Duclos, faintly, recovering from the shock, and staggering towards her with outstretched arms. “We did but jest, Valérie—but jest, dear Valérie—nought else”—

“Approach me not!” shrieked the wretched girl, shrinking with horror from him. “Touch me not! O God! God! God!” she continued, tossing her arms wildly in the air, “would that I had ne’er been born!”

The knocking at the outer door was repeated louder and more imperatively than before.

“Hark!” she exclaimed, with frenzied eagerness; “hark! the ministers of vengeance are already at your heels. Fly, fly, wretched man! Fly, O wretched mother, from the doom about to burst upon you.”

“You rave, Valérie! We did but jest, I tell you; and, even were it otherwise, what evidence can be adduced”—

“Listen, murderer!” cried the maddened girl, springing forward and grasping him by the wrist, and at the same time casting off Julie, who, terrified and bewildered, clung to her gown. “Listen! *I, I*, your daughter, your Valérie, have betrayed you to the



scaffold; have repeated the whole hideous lie which you palmed off upon me to De Liancourt; told him that *I* saw the fatal cup administered to Annette! Oh, now I comprehend it all, and a thousand things beside, so dark and bewildering before! And I tell you he is already at the door with the officers of justice!"——

Again the thundering summons echoed through the house, and a stern voice was heard to exclaim, "Ouvrez! De par la loi!"

"Mother, you hear!" shrieked Valérie, frantically clasping her mother's knees; "you hear they demand admittance in the name of the law! Fly, fly from the scaffold your own child has raised for you!"

The mother moved not, spoke not. The fascination of sudden terror held her rooted to the spot in dumb amazement.

Once more the stern summons was repeated, and then followed the rending and crashing of wood. They were breaking down the door.

A wild imprecation burst from Duclos as he glared bewilderedly round, as if in search of some means of defence or escape. His brain was in a whirl; and he could no longer calculate or reason upon how far Valérie *could* have committed him.

"Silence, Pierre!" exclaimed Madame Duclos, recovering her speech, "and, if you can, save yourself! Here, through this open casement! The next house<sup>\*</sup> is empty, and you can pass along as you did yesterday in chase of the bird. The opening between

the houses is not wide. Hasten, *my* hour is come, but you may yet escape. Imbecile," she continued with bitter emphasis, as her eye marked Duclos' progress along the sloping roof; "he does not even yet recognise the hand that has crushed us beneath the very idol we had set up in his stead. Ah," she exclaimed with a sudden shriek, "he has missed the leap! O God, forgive him!" She turned from the dread sight, sick to death, and, as she fell into her daughter's outstretched arms, the life-blood jetted forth in a copious and rapid stream. At the same instant the door burst open, and the room was filled by the officers of justice, followed by De Liancourt, Duplessis, and Lord and Lady Ormsby.

An hour afterwards, Valérie was alone with her mother. A confession drawn up by the commissary of police, more for the sake of establishing the identity of Julia Arlington than for aught else, had been signed by the dying woman; and Julia, obliged to be torn from her beloved friend's arms by force, was already on her road to England.

No sound was heard in the room save the ticking of the *pendule*, reminding the expiring sinner how rapidly the few remaining moments left to her were passing away. "The foreign lady, Valérie," she murmured, "said, did she not, that she would provide for and shelter thee?"

"Yes; but oh, my mother! think not of me—I shall

need no shelter—but of yourself think! oh think whilst it is yet time!” Valérie held a crucifix before the swiftly-glazing eyes of her dying parent: she did not appear to heed it; but at last a flash, as of parting intelligence, beamed forth from her upwardly-directed eyes; her hands were feebly joined together, and, faintly murmuring, “Pardon, Dieu juste et tout-puissant, pardon!” she sank back, and expired.

The fall of Duclos was partially broken by an instinctive clutch at a flag hung out in token of rejoicing from one of the windows of the house towards which he had leapt. It was rent away by his weight, but the violence of his descent was materially arrested; and he fell, stunned, maimed, bleeding, but still alive, upon the pavement. A number of passers-by instantly gathered round; and, whilst they were debating what had best be done with the sufferer, officers of police hurried up, and Duclos, still unconscious, was carried to a fiacre, and driven off to prison. Arrived there, a surgeon examined his hurts, prescribed the necessary remedies for reducing the swellings of his broken limbs, and, without pronouncing any opinion upon the probable ultimate result, withdrew till the morning; and Duclos, who had fully recovered his senses, was alone with the dark silence.

Alone, but for the thronging shapes which his disordered imagination conjured out of the thick blackness by which he was surrounded: mocking fiends that hissed in his shrinking ears all that he might have been

—all that he now was—all that might in the future, in the great “perhaps,” await him. “Can it be,” murmured the despairing wretch, pressing his outspread hands upon his eyes and forehead, as if to shut out those torturing fantasies, and still the palpitation of his throbbing brain—“can it be that the old creed of a superintending Providence is, after all, true? The grave has not indeed given up its dead to confront and convict me; and yet how strangely has vengeance, perhaps death! dogged at my heels, and at last surprised and clutched me! No, no, no! it is impossible: it must be a mere dream of dotards! Life, life! this beloved life! to which one clings so eagerly even in the last extremity! Life, the crowning fact and achievement of a universe of atoms, have I not heard and read a thousand and a thousand times, is but the necessary result of a particular organisation of senseless matter, which destroyed, disorganised, life perishes necessarily and eternally! . . . . The reasoning seems hardly so clear now as it once did. There should be priests of unbelief appointed; salaried professors of the creed of annihilation to sustain and console their votaries in these cold, dark moments.”

The entrance of two persons with the embrocations and other appliances ordered by the surgeon interrupted his troubled communings. Their task occupied a considerable time; at the end of which an opiate was administered to the patient, and he sank into uneasy slumber.

He was awoke in the cold gray light of the morning by the entrance of a young man, one of the surgeon's assistants, with whom he had been slightly acquainted. His mind was calmer now; the agonizing pain of his wounds had entirely left him, and renewed hopes of life, of escape from the meshes of the blind, if iron law, flushed his haggard cheeks with a faint hectic, and partially relit his sunken eyes.

"Courage, Monsieur Duclos!" exclaimed the young man; "courage, mon ami. This little affair may not have so very bad a termination after all. Monsieur Duval will be here in about an hour, and the operation will be over in a twinkling."

"Operation!"

"Parbleu! it is your only chance! Ah ca," continued the custom-hardened student, coolly lighting a cigar, and entirely heedless of his auditor's consternation, "that was an awkward business to come to light so unexpectedly; but as you are rich, and can fee the lawyers well, I think you have still a chance if you survive the operation. There is no *corpus delicti*; and whether your daughter's evidence, supported by Madame Duclos' dying confession, will remedy that defect, is, I should say, though I am not much versed in such matters, a nice point—a very nice point indeed."

"My wife!" gasped Duclos. "Is Marie dead?"

"Parbleu, to be sure she is; and here," added the young gentleman with a very discontented air, as he extinguished his cigar, and thrust what remained of it

into his pocket, "comes Monsieur Duval nearly an hour before his time."

"Is amputation inevitable?" demanded Duclos in a faint voice, as he watched the surgeon examine and count the bright instruments which one of the young men that accompanied him was ranging on a table that had been brought into the cell.

"I will tell you directly," replied the surgeon coldly, as, after ascertaining that nothing had been forgotten, he approached the pallet, and removed the bedclothes. The examination lasted but a few seconds. The covering was replaced, and M. Duval looked with stern meaning in the patient's face.

"There will be no operation required, Monsieur Duclos. Mortification, as I apprehended, has already supervened, and you have but a few hours to live."

A cry of uttermost despair burst from the miserable man as he sprang up in the bed, and glared like a wild animal at bay at the unmoved surgeon.

"Edouard, put the instruments carefully up. Shall I send you a priest, Monsieur Duclos?" Duval added with a slight sneer. "They are re-established, you know."

The only answer was a yell of agony from the wretched being, as he fell back on his pillow, and buried his face in the bedclothes. A minute afterwards, Duclos was again alone with the dread silence, and within the now visible shadow of death. The shadow grew and deepened, and in a few hours the silence of mortality had become eternal.

"A terrible but not utterly hopeless parting of an immortal, but stained and defaced soul," writes De Liancourt in his diary, from which much has been already quoted, "for there mingled with his dark fancies wailing expressions of repentance and remorse, and trembling hope, awakened doubtless by the tones of a sweet angel voice which in those last moments, as throughout his life, alone had power to soothe and calm his gloomy and perturbed spirit."

Auguste Le Blanc, ignorant of the calamity that had befallen him, repaired in the morning to the early service of the church of Saint Rocque. Valérie had been there, the old *quêteuse* told him, about an hour before, had said her prayers, and departed. With a beating heart the lover hastened to the Rue Vivienne. He did not see Valérie; but, as he turned homewards with dizzy brain and reeling step, he no longer wondered that the flowers and blossoms, worn yesterday with so much modest pride, were now scattered, faded, and scentless at the feet of the Christ. The world, he felt, had closed on Valérie.

Even so! Within a month of the death of her parents, Valérie Duclos entered a convent of the strictest order, distant about twenty miles from Paris. The property her father died possessed of was transferred to one of the Paris hospitals.

"I have frequently attended," remarks De Liancourt, "the chapel of the Benedictine Convent when it was opened upon occasions of high church festival, attracted

chiefly, if not solely, by the interest excited in me by the gentle, pure-minded daughter of Duclos. I seldom saw her, and but once, I think, spoke to her; but I could always recognise the tones of her sweet, patient voice in the beseeching choral harmonies which at intervals of the service arose from the veiled nuns; and I knew that the winged canticle, as it went up to heaven, ever bore with it the soul-supplication of that meek, guileless, trusting child for the guilty, but still loved, authors of her being. Long after the public worship had concluded, the silent prayer ascended from the self-immolated votary, kneeling in unclouded faith, hope, charity, before the altar of the Saviour, whose loving, pierced hands are, as she believed, ever stretched forth to bind up the broken heart, to heal the bruised spirit. I was present on the day when Valérie, having concluded her novitiate, finally separated herself from the world. The irrevocable words were pronounced amidst the hush of a numerous congregation, attracted by the sad story of her trials and her virtues; and I, for one, felt that a purer, a holier sacrifice had never been offered on the altars of the religion of sorrow, of hope, and love."

### VIII.

About eleven years after these events, and only two days after peace had again unsealed the ports of France, an English travelling-carriage, containing Lord and Lady Ormsby and Miss Arlington, was driving with



hot speed along one of the principal highways of that country. It drew up at the gate of a convent.

"Am I too late?" said the younger lady, addressing the superior of the convent, who had been apparently expecting her.

"I think not, mademoiselle; but you have not a moment to spare. Follow me."

The superior or abbess of the convent led the way, and Miss Arlington, passionately weeping, followed. "There," said the guide, pointing to one of the dormitories—"there is your friend: she desired to see you alone." An instant afterwards, the long-sundered companions were in each other's arms.

"Valérie, beloved friend and sister, do I arrive but to behold you thus?"

"Thou kind, beautiful Julie!" replied a sweet voice, most musical, though scarcely louder than a whisper, whilst a smile, reflected from the angel-faces bending in love over that holy death-scene, illuminated the pale, wasted features of the speaker—"how could I be found in a more blessed state than in sight of heaven, and encircled in those dear arms?" The smile did not pass away; and Julie, fearing to disturb her by a breath, continued to hold her in her mute embrace. The superior, who had followed with noiseless steps, at length touched her arm: "Your Valérie is in heaven! She waited but to bid you farewell."

Valérie had frequently expressed a wish to be buried

by the side of her unhappy parents, who, thanks to the energetic influence exercised by Duplessis and De Liancourt, had been interred in the consecrated ground of Père La Chaise. This religion of the tomb—felt and acknowledged by all, but chiefly by gentle and loving natures—which seeks to reunite within the circle of the grave the sundered kindred and friends of life, was of course readily complied with. She sleeps beneath a simple marble monument, erected to her memory by her beloved Julie, which bears only her baptismal name, and the expression of a prayer, which, during life, the superior said, was ever on her lips or in her thoughts :—

“AGNUS DEI, QUI TOLLIS PECCATA MUNDI, MISEREERE NOBIS.”

The tall cross by which the tomb is surmounted flings in the calm evening sunlight its consecrating shadow over the plain slab by its side, and *immortelles* cast by the hand of affection or of reverence upon the daughter's grave fall, not unfrequently, upon the last resting-place of Pierre and Marie Duclos—an emblem and a hope!

Julie Arlington, for many brilliant years a peeress of the realm. and still the life and grace of the distinguished circle in which she moves, has never ceased to think with regretful tenderness, and with a chastened spirit, amid all the glare and grandeur of her position, upon the modest virtues, the grievous trials, and the final recompense of Valérie.



## The Romance of Common Life.

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### No. 2.—THE SAUCY GIPSY.

I HAVE the liveliest recollection of the 3rd of July, 1854 ; more so, perhaps, than of any other day in the calendar of my life, wherein it is emphatically marked with a distinguishing stone—the colour whereof the reader may guess from the tale I have to tell. It was not at all, I may premise, because the morrow was “Independence Day,” that ~~that~~ particular eve of a glorious anniversary dwells so freshly in my memory. So far from that, I am pretty sure—true-blooded American as I am—my mother at least was a Boston girl, and I was born there—that on that morning the old stirring watchwords, “Our heroic forefathers,” “The saviour of his country,” “Bunker’s Hill,” and so on, would have jarred disagreeably on my ear, so utterly

out of unison would they have been with the heavenly frame of mind in which I awoke from delightful dreams to paradisiacal consciousness of waking bliss.

As I leaped out of bed, the bright young day, cloudless, beautiful, as my hopes, was thrusting aside the summer night-curtains, and coming forth a jocund bridegroom to embrace his slumbering bride the earth, and with his glowing kisses awaking her to life and loveliness. It will be easily understood, from this shining similitude, what my head was running upon ; but the dawn was really a brilliant one, and the picturesque villas and gay gardens of Staten Island, apparelled in its golden light, shone out in their most attractive aspect. Staten Island, the reader may or may not be aware, is a kind of southern suburb of New York, separated from its sister isle Manhattan, whereon the empire city stretches its huge, restless, ever-swelling bulk, along about five miles of sheltered sea—New York Bay—across which you may be ferried for a few cents in a floating steam-palace. My father, Joshua Henderson, master-mariner, and for many years prosperous ship-owner of New York, had, not long before my mother's death, purchased a pleasant dwelling there—Hope Cottage, so named by himself, where he was every day becoming more and more a fixture. The chief and active share in the business of Henderson & Co. had been some time since ceded to his partners ; and my father, moreover, was growing, with increasing years and substance, proportionably chary in his shipping

ventures, most of which had latterly been participated by Aunt Martha, his widowed and wealthy sister, located, with her daughter Ruth, at Sherborne Villa, within scarcely more than a stone's-throw of Hope Cottage—and about as sensible and sharp a dame as ever trod in shoe-leather. As for my noble self, I had been intended for a profession—my father inclined to law, my aunt to divinity—but, as it was soon abundantly clear that I should never make a particularly bright figure in either of these, that notion was reluctantly given up. Aunt Martha especially—she was the relict of Silas Garstone, wholesale dealer in dry goods, Broadway, and major in the New York Militia—resented the family disappointment to a most unreasonable degree. I was a failure, she said, and she hated failures: and, as regarded Ruth, I must prove myself worth my salt, which she doubted I ever should do, in some calling or other, before she could bring herself to look upon me as her daughter's future husband; a sentiment, she savagely added, which Ruth fully endorsed. To this un-aunt-like estimate of her only nephew, I, of course, sturdily demurred. I reckoned myself up very differently. I stood five feet eleven in my stockings, enjoyed robust health, and a flow of spirits sufficient, if commercially available, to set up a first-rate liquor store in Broadway, and was, besides, sole heir to at least 2,000 dollars per annum—Hope Cottage and fixings<sup>f</sup> over the bargain. What on earth, therefore, could it signify, in a husbandly sense, that I had not

come off with exactly flying colours at Harvard University, or as yet shown signs of a gift for preaching! When I was at home, Ruth and I had been for years inseparable companions; and it thus came to pass that I unconsciously, as it were, but in perfect accordance, I apprehend, with a law of nature, very early arrived at a decided conclusion that we were especially created for each other, and that to sunder or mate us with uncongenial souls would be an inexpiable crime, alike against humanity and Heaven. Certainly I had always misgivings as to Ruth's entire accordance with those views; and upon reaching home on Sunday forenoon, 2nd July, after bidding final farewell to Harvard, I determined to bring the damsel to the test without delay. For this purpose, I seized the opportunity afforded by the dropping in, soon after dinner, of one of my father's old cronies, to slip quietly off to Sherborne Villa. The reception awaiting me was a gratifying one. My aunt's manner was decidedly less grim and gritty than at my last visit, and Ruth was wonderfully gracious—actually proposed—namely not objecting—that we should take a long walk together!

To be sure, the afternoon was fine and cool; all the world abroad, and she had not yet sported the new dress sent her from New York—considerations which, I doubted not, had something to do with the flattering proposal. However that might be, the walk was a very pleasant one, and would have been much more so but that Ruth, as usual, laughed off every attempt at

serious discourse. Still, I was in high feather when we returned, and sat down to tea with dear Dame Garstone; soon, however, it proved, to be sweetly combed down. A tall, handsome, military-looking man, forty years old or so, charged into the room, and was received with all the honours. "Mr. Hartmann"—"My nephew, Mark Henderson." The fellow merely glanced at me, in a *de haut en bas* sort of way, but to the ladies he was immensely courteous, especially to Ruth, who received his common-place compliments with evident gratification—but whether only to torment me, I was soon too hot and angry to determine clearly. I stood it pretty well for about half an hour, and then went off with a bounce, and was so little cooled when I entered the parlour of Hope Cottage, a quarter of an hour or so afterwards—I had taken one or two restless turns about the neighbourhood before going in—as to exclaim in a key absurdly loud, except as affording some slight relief to the irritation which was choking me: "Confound that saucy gipsy! Certainly the most distracting riddle of a girl that ever plagued and puzzled susceptible, ingenuous man!"

My father was sitting at an open window, intensely scrutinising through his telescope a large vessel entering the bay from the Narrows. As his deafness had greatly increased upon him of late, I did not suppose, vehemently as I expressed myself, that he could have heard me. I was mistaken: he had caught a portion,

at all events, of my words and meaning; for, immediately turning from the window, and eyeing me with a grimly smiling expression as he seated himself, and in his slow, deliberate way refilled his pipe and grog-glass, he said: "You have seen the saucy gipsy, then?"

"Confound her!—yes," I growled; but, as he did not hear me, I nodded affirmation.

"That's well," he replied, adding in his usual sea-slang dialect: "she's a handsome craft, Mark, no doubt, but a little cranky, I fear, and wants more ballast to bring her down to her proper bearings."

"And a skilful captain, too," I bawled, falling in with his humour.

"That *is* right, lad; and then, I reckon, she'll behave very prettily."

"Doubtful," thought I, as I helped myself to a cigar and a tumbler of rum and water. Whenever thoroughly ryled, I am always thirsty.

"They've bedizened her out with a deal of finery," resumed the ancient mariner.

"That's New York fashion," I shouted at the top of my voice. "She must not be out of the fashion, you know."

"Pray don't scream so, Mark: a stranger would suppose I was as deaf as a post. As to New York fashions, the Boston folk aint much behind in expensive fal-the-rals." Here the dialogue was suspended, I being in no mood for talk, and the governor hardly prepared to translate in words the astounding intelli-



gence which I, much wondering what on earth was coming, saw gradually pierce through and illumine his weather-beaten phiz.

"Mark!" said he at last, when the aurora had reached its fullest intensity—"Mark!"

I did mark, and silently intimated as much.

"I have great news for you, Mark," he went on to say. "You're in wonderful luck, my lad—that's a fact, and so you'll say yourself presently. Your aunt, who is, you know, principally interested, was dead against you all along, and required a mortal deal of persuading. 'Here,' I kept a saying whenever I had a chance—'here's Mark coming home from college with, they say, no gift of tongues whatever, and unfit, consequently, for either law or gospel. The question is, then, how to settle him in the world, and what he's fit for?' I shan't vex you, Mark," continued my father, "by repeating the answer I got, particularly as your aunt veered round all of a sudden—the very day, I mind, that fellow Hartmann or Shartmann came over to Staten Island; and the long and short of it is, that we've agreed you shall be set going in life at once, with an allowance to start with of sixty dollars a month, in—in consideration," added the veteran with exultant glee, "that you consent to take legal charge of the craft you were talking of—— Hollo! I say—what now?"

My arms were clasped in a trice round the astounded ship-owner's neck, arresting further speech by a grasp, which he only got rid of by an exertion of strength

that sent me reeling, till brought up by a sofa, on which I sat down involuntarily.

"Plague take the boy!" growled my father, hitching his discomposed vestments together, and eyeing me with angry surprise—"has he taken leave of his senses?" Confused, dizzy, overwhelmed, I could only gasp out a jumble of excuses, blessings, thanks, which he could not have heard, but seemed nevertheless to comprehend dimly.

"Well, well," he interrupted; "enough said, enough said, Mark. It's a good thing, no doubt, to be set up handsomely in life at your age. Still, there's for and against; and, in fact, it's a venturesome risk for all parties." With that he turned to the window and his telescope, and I rushed into the garden to shout, leap, cry—unheard, unseen. I was but a boy, you know.

The stars were looking forth when, still very nervous and excited, I knocked at my aunt's door. The mulatto help, in reply to my inquiry for her young mistress, pointed to an inner apartment, where, finding Ruth alone, I threw myself at her feet, and poured forth a torrent of wild, wordy rhapsody, to which she hearkened like one in a dream. Presently recovering from the shock and surprise of such a salutation, she forcibly disengaged her dress from my grasp, and angrily exclaimed, "Mark Henderson! you have been drinking; you are positively tipsy, sir!"

"Drinking! yes! joy from golden goblets, which"—

"Absurd!" interrupted Ruth with increasing dis-

pleasure. "Pray have done with such senseless rhodomontade, and tell me quietly, soberly, if you can, what it is my uncle has been saying to you."

I did so, as nearly as I could, in my father's own words. So overflowing was Ruth Garstone's mirthful gaiety of heart, that I saw she had the greatest difficulty as I proceeded to repress a burst of girlish merriment. But my evident sincerity, the fervour of a true affection, which must have been apparent through all the high-flown fustian in which it was expressed, touched the dear girl's better nature—a shade, so to speak, of kindness and sympathy gathered over her beaming face; and, when I had concluded, she said gently: "I perfectly understand, Mark: we will speak further on the subject to-morrow; you are too excited now; and hark! that is mamma's step. I would not have you see her at this moment for the world. This way, through the garden. My dear Mark," she added, caressingly, seeing that I hesitated, "do come, let me beg of you, and at once."

The reader is now in possession of the why and wherefore of the blissful state of being in which I awoke from soft slumbers on the 3rd of July, 1854; though why I got up so very early, I cannot precisely say. Awfully slow, I remember, the time seemed to pass till eight o'clock struck, the hour at which, I knew, my Aunt Martha and Ruth were expected. When I entered the breakfast-room, my father was there alone, and a little sourish-tempered.

"If sister and her gal don't come soon, I shan't wait," he grumbled. "I suppose they're staying to get breakfast for that stranger they're so sweet upon. And, by the bye, Mark, that free-and-easy-going chap is bound on the same pleasant vy'ge as yourself."

"The deuce! Surely he's not going to marry Aunt Martha!"

"What's that?" said my father, forming his left hand into an ear-trumpet.

I repeated what I had said in a louder key.

"Marry your Aunt Martha! Who was talking about marrying aunts or uncles"——

He was stopped by the entrance of the dame herself. I jumped up all of a tremble, shook hands with her, and then gazed stupidly at the reclosed door.

The good lady looked at me in a queer, quizzical sort of way, as she said, in answer to my blank aspect: "Ruth wouldn't come; she will have it there is some strange mistake."

"What's all that about?" demanded my father, impatient for his coffee.

"I was telling Mark," said his sister, seating herself, and placing her lips close to his ear, "that Ruth wouldn't come."

"Then let Ruth stay away," was the gruff response. "You, and I, and Mark can settle the business we are upon without her, I hope."

"Without Ruth!" I exclaimed, a hot qualm flushing through me. "That would indeed be, as they say,

the play of *Hamlet* with the part of the Prince of Denmark left out."

"Don't talk of plays!" interrupted Aunt Garstone, with a nervous shudder, and still fixing me with that odd, quizzical look: "they've crazed the wits of wiser folk than you, my poor boy. Why, what ails the lad?" she continued in a much louder tone. "It can't surely be true, Joshua Henderson, that you've been telling him we've agreed that he's to marry my Ruth?"

Joshua Henderson looked as if apprehensive that his deafness had assumed a new and more disastrous phase—that of totally perverting the sound and sense of words addressed to him, and Aunt Martha iterated her query twice or thrice before he replied to it.

"I tell Mark," he at length said, "that he was to marry thy Ruth! Pooh! I don't believe I mentioned the gal's name!" This was too much.

"What!" I fairly screamed, "you did not assure me, yester-evening, that my aunt, after much persuasion, had agreed that the best thing to be done was for me to marry Ruth at once—take legal charge of her, were your words—and that we were to have an allowance, to start with, of sixty dollars a month, besides a reasonable outfitting: do you mean seriously to deny that?"

"You young varmint!" shouted my father; "if I haven't a mind to"——

"Well, but what, Joshua, *did* you tell him?" inter-

rupted my aunt, springing up and interposing between us. "As Ruth says, a strange mistake has been made by somebody."

"What did I tell him, sister?—why, this: that our new clipper-brig, the *Saucy Gipsy*, loaded with sorted sundries for Constantinople and elsewhere, was to be placed under his legal charge as supercargo, with"—

Enough! more than enough! A sensation akin to sea-sickness came over me; and it was only by a great effort that I retained sufficient strength to leave the room, stagger up stairs, and throw myself, in bitter anguish, upon the bed from which so short a time before I had risen in such elation of mind.

Two or three bitter hours brought healing on their wings, suggesting as they did that, after all, I had no right to rave in that mad way of cruel fate and unpropitious stars! The air-drawn prospect, existing only in my own imagination, had vanished—that was all, leaving me, so far as Ruth was concerned, in the same position as before; whilst Aunt Martha's opinion of my discretion and ability must have greatly improved, since she had consented to invest me with so important a charge as the one proposed. These and similar cogitations were interrupted by a tap at the door, and "Can I come in now, Mark?" sharply demanded by Dame Garstone herself. She was instantly admitted; and I was glad to see that, in place of the mocking, quizzical look, as I interpreted it, her countenance wore an expression of kindliness and

benignity. "I shall not let Ruth know," she began, "how crazily you behaved this morning: she is quite vain enough already. But I may tell you, that it has much inclined me to believe you capable of—that you do, in fact, love your cousin with a sincere and lasting affection."

"Ah, my dear aunt, if I might only express to you how fervently"—

"No, don't, Mark," she hastily interrupted: "I would much rather not. I feel increased confidence, I was about to say, that I shall not have reason to regret placing you in charge of the large venture embarked in the *Saucy Gipsy*—you may well blush and wince at that ridiculous blunder—unless this, her first voyage, should be permanently associated in our minds with calamitous tidings, as I much fear may be the case."

"What the deuce is coming now?" thought I, as my aunt paused, in some embarrassment it seemed.

"I cannot give you," she resumed, "a stronger proof that I already look upon you as my son—pray, sit still—than by placing that confidence in you which I deem it prudent to withhold from my own brother. I have never, indeed, doubted your manliness and courage, Mark, and that conviction first suggested to me that you would not be an unfit person to take care that Karl Hartmann—whom you saw yesterday at my house, and who is to sail with you in the *Saucy Gipsy*—does not play me and others false."

"I am to be a kind of supercargo, then, to Mr. Karl Hartmann, am I?"

"Something, as you say, of that kind. But, that we may thoroughly understand each other, I must begin at the beginning. You are aware, Mark, that your father and I arrived in America from England now about five-and-thirty years ago, he being then in his twenty-sixth, I in my fifteenth year. Joshua had long made up his mind to emigrate, but I should hardly have done so, had my home continued to be what it once was. Our father kept a shop in the small town where we were born, and where our mother died, soon after the birth of her youngest child, myself. Matters went on pretty much as usual till about my ninth year, when our father gradually yielded himself up to dissipated, or, perhaps I should say, desultory, idle habits, delighting especially in theatrical entertainments, so that whenever a troop of players entered the town, we were sure to have two or three of them living at rack and manger with us. The upshot was—but we are none of us our own keepers—that my father married an actress, of no great skill in her profession, I understood, but young, showy, and of course artful—successfully assuming to be the essence of her craft. This is, I know, according to you, mere unreasoning prejudice; but let that pass. From that time my father's house was no longer a home to me, and I soon decided upon accepting the repeated invitation of my uncle Philipps, to



come over to Boston, and take up my abode in his childless home. It was well," continued Aunt Martha in a subdued tone, "that my brother was free to come away at the time he did, for there was fast strengthening a link of love binding me to that unhappy household which a few more years would have rendered indissoluble. God, as we all know, sends his rain alike upon the just and the unjust, and his choicest creations are scattered with the same all-embracing bounteousness. One of the loveliest human flowers that ever blossomed upon earth sprang from that else unblest union. Viola, the child was named after some character in a play, and, bitter grief to me, her mother, with my weak father's concurrence, began, from the first hour the pure, intelligent child was capable of receiving instruction, to train and educate her for the stage! I left Sherborne when Viola was in her fifth year, and her subsequent history, so far as it has been made known to me by her letters, of which I have received many, may soon be told. My father died in embarrassed circumstances; Mrs. Henderson returned to the stage; and Viola made her first appearance at one of the inferior London theatres with but partial success. This disappointment greatly soured the mother's temper, never a very lamb-like one, and she led her daughter such a wretched life, that the poor, unguided child threw herself away upon a wild young fellow of the name of Dalzell—Arthur Dalzell."

"Dalzell! a rather fine name that," I interjected, "but an assumed one, perhaps."

“ No ; he was a young man of good family, who had lost both his parents in his nonage, and, upon reaching the ripe maturity of twenty-one, was cast upon the world to scramble through it as he best could, with a fortune of five or six hundred pounds, and habits of expense requiring five times as much as that yearly. He had, however, the good taste, though himself what is called a gentleman-amateur, to withdraw his wife from the stage. Finding himself, but a few months after marriage, in imminent danger of a gaol, he managed to procure a commission in the English force serving under General Evans' in Spain. There he speedily acquired a character for reckless daring ; and when General Evans's troops were disbanded, he transferred his services to the French Foreign Legion, employed in Africa. A long interval passed, and then I heard of them from Southern Russia ; and that Captain Dalzell was an officer in the army of the Czar.”

“ Verily, a roving, adventurous gentleman ! But did Aunt Viola share his wanderings ? ”

“ She was his inseparable companion. Captain Dalzell's employment in Russia was not, if I rightly understood Viola, entirely of a military character. He had something to do with Government contracts, in which he failed, in consequence, it seemed, of the bad faith of a partner. This I learned from the last letter I ever received from my sister : it was dated from Odessa ! ”

“ I know : the place which the French and Bri-

tishers have lately cannonaded in a considerate, merciful sort of way, as if desirous of hurting the Russians as little as possible."

"That letter," continued my aunt, "informed me that Captain Dalzell had left Russia for ever, and that she and their only surviving child, Marian, were about to follow, whither she did not precisely know, but very probably to America. This, it proved, was their destination; but unhappily, whilst Ruth and I were absent in Boston, Captain Dalzell arrived at New York, made himself known to my husband, who received him most cordially; lent him five hundred dollars, mainly for the alleged purpose of sending for his wife and daughter; which sum the unhappy man appears to have lost at a gaming-house in one night. The next day he set off, as a curt note apprised your uncle, to join the Mexicans, in arms to defend their country against the braggart Yankees!"

"My stars! but such a note as that from a man that had choused him out of five hundred dollars, must have got the major's dander up alarmingly!"

"My husband was, and naturally so, very wroth; but he acted unjustly in his anger, by writing an unkind, reproachful letter to Viola, whose address he found in my writing-desk, indirectly upbraiding her with Captain Dalzell's misdeeds. I knew of all this too late. The excusatory letter I immediately wrote was returned after a long interval, with a postal intimation that Madame Dalzell had left Odessa; and, from her

continued silence, I was fain to conclude that Viola had finished her sad earthly pilgrimage, till a few days since, when this Karl Hartmann came over to Staten Island, bringing a long letter addressed to me from Arthur Dalzell, who, it appears, is dying at San Francisco, and, repentant too late, is anxious to induce his long-abandoned wife, who is still living somewhere in South Russia, to come over to America, that he may see her and his child once more before his eyes close upon a world in which he has played so unworthy a part. Karl Hartmann, his friend, knows, he writes, South Russia well, and with my assistance will be able to discover the present whereabouts of Viola, and bring her safely here. She has, it appears, supported herself and Marian for several years past by teaching music, but of late her eyesight had begun to fail her; and thus whilst I, her own sister, have been wrapped in ease, comfort, luxury, the sweet, beauteous child—for, Mark, dear Mark,” sobbed my aunt, giving way to the choking grief which for some minutes had rendered her speech almost unintelligible—“I cannot realise her to myself but as I saw her last, God’s radiant angel-child—she, I say, has the while been hopelessly struggling with calamity—abandoned, blind! O heavenly Father! thy ways, thy dispensations are indeed inscrutable!”

“This is a strange story, dear aunt,” I ventured to remark after a while. “Does Mr. Hartmann require funds of you for his journey?”

“Yes; and large funds too, Mark.”

"I thought so. But how comes it that Captain Dalzell does not know his wife's precise address? Merely that she may be heard of somewhere in South Russia—a pleasant country, I guess, to hunt over upon such an errand just now."

"I asked that very question," said my aunt; "and the answer was, that Dalzell had not for a very long time heard from my sister, except indirectly. I, however, positively refused, from the first, to advance the money, except through you, and from time to time as the exigency might arise. This Mr. Hartmann strongly demurred to; but after seeing you yester afternoon—you have rather a raw, boyish look, Mark—he made no further objection to that arrangement."

"Mr. Hartmann may find, when the push comes, that he has mistaken his man, or boy, since boy I am seemingly doomed to remain all my days."

"Ruth says you will prove yourself a match for half-a-dozen German Hartmanns," said Aunt Martha, pitching a very soothing, soft-sawdering note. "And it is certain that in prosecuting the search after your aunt Viola you will incur no danger. The Czar is anxious just now to cultivate friendly relations with this country, and you will be provided with letters from strongly influential parties here to Mr. Brown, the American representative at Constantinople."

"I shall do my best, be assured, dear aunt, to deserve Ruth's flattering opinion, and to accomplish your wishes."

Aunt Martha's quivering lips pressed mine in acceptance of that pledge, and we then went down stairs, where we found my father hob-nobbing with the said Karl Hartmann, unquestionably a man of superior, commanding aspect; and no one could look upon his sun-bronzed, scarred visage—two sword-cuts, not at all disfiguring—and tall, well set-up figure, without instantly recognising a soldier of service.

The brief conversation that ensued turned upon the war, to the theatre whereof we were bound, the stranger displaying not only an intimate knowledge of the countries to which it was likely to extend, but an inveterate, supercilious John Bullism, as surprising in a German as the perfection of his pronunciation.

"You speak English wonderfully well, Mr. Hartmann," I remarked.

"Not at all wonderfully, Mr. Henderson," he replied, "when you remember that I have passed several years in these United States, where, as you know, the *genuine* accent can alone be acquired."

The sneering tone and emphasis with which this was said, made my blood tingle again; and, cudgelling my brains for a smart retort, I came out with the following brilliant, if not quite novel, home-thrust: "It is certainly very amusing to find Great Britain, with India and half a world besides in her omnivorous grasp, affecting such righteous horror of aggressive war."

Before Hartmann's flashing glance could be interpreted by words, Dame Garstone interposed with—"There is, at all events, a mighty difference in favour of England as against Russia, in one respect: England did not invade India and other countries in simulated vindication of the Gospel of God—solemnly inaugurate the work of the Devil in the name of Christ."

"Just so, madam," said Hartmann, rising to go away. "Cotton would be a more appropriate inscription upon Britain's aggressive banner than the name invoked by the Czar. The *Saucy Gipsy*," he added, with a mockingly merry glance at the indignant supercargo, "will, it is understood, sail, wind and weather permitting, the day after to-morrow, at about noon. I shall not fail to be punctual." Mr. Hartmann then, after a brief private conference with my aunt, left the house; and so did I, a few minutes subsequently, with Aunt Martha.

The wind blew fresh from the south-west; the blue-Peter had been for some time flying at the foretop-mast-head of the *Saucy Gipsy*—the brig, by the bye, *had* been so named after Ruth's household and familiar soubriquet—now moored off the landing-place at Staten Island, and the order was at length given to cast off; whereupon Aunt Martha, who had been urging her counsels and commands over and over again, hastened from the cabin upon deck, bidding Ruth follow.

"Good-bye, Cousin Mark," said Ruth, holding out

her little hand, and speaking with a lightness of tone I was sure was only assumed. "We shall think of the *Saucy Gipsy* oftener, I daresay, than you will."

"Ah, Ruth, if you only felt as I feel"—

"Mercy forbid! Not, at least, as you felt ten minutes ago—fit to murder poor Mr. Hartmann; and all because I was commonly civil to the man."

"Ruth! Ruth!"

"Just as if a girl of my angelic sweetness of disposition *could* look cross or forbidding, if she tried."

"Oh, come, I'll be darned if"—

"Nonsense! Hold your tongue—do! You've nothing more to say to me, I suppose, Mark?" she added, balancing herself upon one foot, and holding the cabin-door in her hand. "Coming, mamma!"

"Nothing—but that I must have a kiss at parting."

"I daresay! For shame, you rude boy! Did you ever! Why, Mark! Here I am, mamma!"

The *Saucy Gipsy* got away in first-rate style: she was evidently a racer; and Joel Brystone, the skipper, was one of the most skilful and experienced seamen of New York. The voyage had at any rate commenced auspiciously. After patrolling the deck in a state of misty excitement, which for two or three hours neutralised emotions of another kind, I was observed by Captain Brystone to catch wildly at the mizen-ratlines.



the region about my lips assuming at the same moment a hue of yellowish-white; whereupon I was forthwith handed below, and laid out in my sleeping-berth. I don't think my sighs and groans ran much upon dear Ruth during the following six or seven days and nights, but her image returned in undiminished lustre and freshness with the restoration of my mental and bodily faculties, and I silently pledged her over and over again in joyous bumpers, after the very first dinner I sat down to at sea. By that time, we had made the Atlas Mountains on the Morocco coast; and, the wind continuing favourable, the *Saucy Gipsy* was soon slipping through the Straits of Gibraltar, towards the Mediterranean, where we at once became intermingled with the tide of war sweeping eastward to drive back the legions of the Czar. Specimens of the whole art and range of ship-craft—from the swift, stupendous screw line-of-battle-ship to the slight and sluggish sailing transport—passed or was passed by the *Saucy Gipsy* during the remainder of the voyage, all full of red and blue soldiers, or freighted with the dumb and equally indispensable instruments of mortal conflict, the red cross and tri-colour floating proudly from the mast-heads; the national airs of France and England resounding from the crowded decks of the coalesced armadas.

“What think you, Mr. Hartmann,” said I, early one morning, as we were both intently watching the huge *Himalaya* sweep past with the Scots Greys on board,

their band playing *Partant pour la Syrie*, in complimentary recognition of *God save the Queen*, indifferently performed by the amateur musicians of a French mail-boat from Malta—"what think you of the stability of this, but a few years since impossible, alliance of the two great Western nations? According to some of the more solemn and second-sighted of the quidnuncs on our side the Atlantic, it amounts to a redistribution of the forces of Europe, not only subversive of the balance of power in the Old, but full of menace to the peace of the New World."

"It is an alliance," replied Hartmann, "dictated by the awakened common sense and the permanent interests of the two nations, and depending for permanence, therefore, neither upon princes nor parchments. As to its menacing America, that is all bosh! unless, indeed, the United States should be conceit-crazed enough to challenge civilised Europe to mortal combat in defence of sacred slavery; as the Muscovite has in vindication of red-handed violence and the precepts of Christianity: then, indeed—— But I eschew prophecy."

"As to conceit," chimed in Captain Brystone, who was standing close by, "I'll back the Britishers against all creation for that; and yet, with all their prancing and trumpeting about this war, they are setting about it, according to their own newspapers, like a parcel of old women, rather than men of sense and pluck."

"There is a tinge of truth in that," said Hartmann;

"but as, no doubt, your sagacity will have already suggested, military departmental deficiencies—the cankers of a long peace—will find a sharp and sure remedy in the experience of actual war."

"That 'long-peace' excuse," persisted Brystone, "won't do at any price; or how is it we never hear of such bungling mismanagement in the French and Russian services?"

"Because, my dear sir, they hold by the Napoleonic maxim—*qu'il faut laver son linge sale chez soi*; a rule there is much to be said in favour of. Still, I prefer, on the whole, unfettered, independent criticism, frequently savage and unjust as it may be towards individuals. Sir John Moore is a notable instance in point—the most furiously abused, and one of the ablest generals England ever sent forth. But it is time to see about breakfast, I think."

"That's a feller, now," remarked the captain, as Hartmann disappeared below, "that would take some time to correctly post up. I agree with you, however, Master Henderson, that he is a Britisher, hail from wherever he may."

We were becalmed for nearly a week in the Mediterranean, save for a brief land-puff now and then; and, the days being intensely hot, Hartmann and I, the only idlers on board, used to take our deck-exercise after sunset, he often reading scenes of plays or snatches of poetry aloud, the brilliance of the night enabling him to read the smallest print with ease. Suddenly breaking

in one evening upon his favourite pastime, I said :  
“What sort of a man is the Arthur Dalzell said to be dying at San Francisco ? ”

“What sort of a man is the Arthur Dalzell said to be dying at San Francisco,” quietly replied Hartmann, folding down the page he had been reading, and closing the book : “well, in person, well-looking enough, and about my own height and age ; in character and disposition, a mingled yarn of good and evil—the evil, as I think, greatly predominating.”

“Come, that’s candid, at all events.”

“You must think so, believing as you do that *I* am Arthur Dalzell.”

“Ha ! How did you infer that ? ”

The man smiled, and, taking me in a patronising way by the arm, said : “My young friend—for a friend I am determined to make of you—that ingenuous face of yours can be read by duller eyes than those of Ruth Garstone. Nay, don’t be foolish ! You naturally wish to know something of your Aunt Viola’s husband—Arthur Dalzell. Here, then, in a few rough strokes, is the man’s moral picture in little :—Dalzell is a soldier, daring by temperament, a generous fellow too, from the same prompting. He is not thought to be a hard or cruel man—certainly, he would not strike a woman or a child ; yet he has abandoned his wife and daughter for years, in order that he might be more free to follow the adventurous, vagabond life he loves. Altogether he is a man of ardent impulses, not without

some pleasant, perhaps good qualities, but utterly destitute of governing principle. Nay, I verily believe," continued Hartmann with strange vehemence, "that although he does love, always has loved his wife—and monster, indeed, must he be, did he not love that gentle, long-suffering woman—yet, I say, I verily believe that there mingles with his fervent longing for reconciliation a base hope, that, in the event of his at least *possible* recovery, he may revel once more in riches by participation in the large sum which, by the death-bed remorse of the man by whom her husband was ruined in the matter of some government contracts, has lately devolved to Mrs. Dalzell."

"Did you inform Mrs. Garstone of the legacy you speak of?"

"Yes, but she seemed not to heed the information, although the bequest is comparatively a large one: silver rubles amounting to nearly five thousand pounds of your money."

"And you are not sure that the vicious maniac you describe is really dying after all!"

"Well, yes, I think he is. We all are, for that matter; but with Arthur Dalzell, I cannot doubt that the wine of life draws near the lees. I agree with you also, that he must be at least partially insane."

We were silent for some minutes, and then I said quickly: "Am I right in supposing that you are personally known to my aunt, Mrs. Dalzell?"

"I know Mrs. Dalzell well; and she knows me,

much too well: I mean, that her esteem can hardly equal her knowledge of me. Of less consequence, you are aware, inasmuch as any business I may have with her can be transacted by proxy—you being that proxy. And if, by chance, I should find myself in her presence, she, unhappy lady, will not, of course, be cognisant of that fact."

Our conversation, after this, turned upon indifferent matters, and it was not long before we retired below, and turned in for the night. Nothing of importance occurred till the *Saucy Gipsy* was safely moored in the Golden Horn—not much then. The cargo was speedily disposed of; all matters of business satisfactorily adjusted; and I was ready to address myself seriously to the fulfilment of my good Aunt Martha's chief behest. But no step could, of course, be taken in the absence of Karl Hartmann, who had disappeared the very day we arrived at Constantinople, after making a bold draw upon the funds in my possession, and promising to return in ten days at the very latest. That time expired, and still no Mr. Hartmann was to be seen or heard of; and I was becoming ferociously impatient, when a letter was placed in my hands by a clerk in a Greek house. It informed me that—but as the letter is before me, and sufficiently concise, I had better simply copy it:

"YALTA, CRIMEA, August 18, 1854.

"MY DEAR SIR—This note will reach you by a sure hand, and will, I trust, decide you upon coming here

without delay. I have obtained exact intelligence of (here there is a blotted erasure) your aunt Dalzell, and her daughter, still, as ever, the chosen companion of calamity—Viola, I mean, not Marian—completely blind, I am told; total eclipse—from cataract, it is said. My position here is a peculiar, and rather menacing one, though, after Ingraham's exploit at Smyrna, I should think my certificate of American naturalisation would pull me through. Perhaps not. There are grave circumstances, which I will explain when I see you. By the bye, Prince Menschikoff, who commands here, is making tremendous preparations for the prompt carrying out of his proclaimed intention to drive the red and blue devils now at Varna into the sea, should they dare pollute the sacred soil of Russia with their profane footsteps, or hoofsteps; an announcement which, being indorsed by a unanimous and orthodox clergy, is received with undoubting faith by all here; even by the poor Tatars, who, like the devils—not the aforesaid red and blue ones—believe and tremble. There is one infidel exception—your obedient servant,

“KARL HARTMANN.”

“*N.B.*—The roadstead here is a safe one at this time of the year, and I think the *Saucy Gipsy* might pick up a profitable cargo of morocco leathers and lamb-skins just now.”

I determined to start at once; and, first giving the necessary directions to Captain Brystone, I hurried off

to Pera with my letters of especial introduction to Mr. Brown. I found our excellent representative at home, and sufficiently at leisure to listen to a brief exposition of my purpose in visiting the Heracleian Chersonesus.

"A simple affair enough in itself," he remarked; "but you should, I think, keep a wary eye upon Master Hartmann's movements. A note I will give you to Prince Menschikoff, with whom, when here, I had something more than an official acquaintance, will enable you to do so effectually."

I thanked Mr. Brown for his kindness, received the all-important note, and sailed the next day for Yalta with a light heart and a spanking breeze.

By this time the steam and sailing vessels required for the transportation of the British and French troops were assembled before Varna—a motley, multitudinous fleet, numbering from 400 to 500 vessels. We passed them on the 4th of September, at about three leagues to windward; for, luckily for that crowded mass of shipping, the wind, half a gale, was blowing *off* the shore. The embarkation was, we saw, vigorously progressing to the sound of martial music, exuberant cheering, and not unfrequent cannon-fire—in enforcement, no doubt, of the orders signalled by the fluttering bunting of a screw two-decker, bearing a rear-admiral's flag. By sun-down we had dropped the whole of the vast armament, with the exception of the top spars of the largest men-of-war: these presently disappeared in the gathering gloom, and not a sail was visible in any



other quarter save those imaginary ones which landmen such as I conjure up in the distance out of flashing foam-horses chasing each other over a wild waste of sea.

"Steam," I remarked to Captain Brystone, as he shut up his glass after a long scrutinising look towards every point of the compass—"steam has, I daresay, greatly increased the facilities for such an enterprise; still, it is quite clear, even to my unskilled judgment, that the gigantic embarkation going on yonder is a terribly hazardous affair."

"That's a fact, Master Henderson," rejoined the captain; "and the boldest Britisher there would think twice of such a venture if the Russian men-of-war, instead of skulking off to hide themselves at Sebastopol, showed they meant to have a downright shindy with their enemies at sea."

"You cannot suppose the Muscovites would have a chance with the British fleet in a sea-fight, not to reckon the French!"

"Not the ghost of a chance, in a regular sea-fight, I am quite sure; but that's not what I'm speaking of. I have seen service with a convoy before now; and I tell you, Master Henderson, that, let the men-of-war look them up as smartly as they may, that thundering fleet of transports won't have been at sea six hours before they are a straggling, higgledy-piggledy line, leagues in length and width. Ten or a dozen swift steam-frigates, or half that number of such frisky

fellows as the two-decker we saw cutting about yonder, well placed and smartly handled, would find opportunities of dashing in amongst them, scatter death and destruction on all sides, create the wildest confusion, and be off again, especially at night, before the war-ships could interfere to any effectual purpose. Just fancy the heavy metal of a frigate or a two-decker crashing through the brown-paper sides of merchant-vessels choke-full of soldiers—transports running into one another to get out of the way—and ask yourself what sort of a plight the army would be in to effect a landing in an enemy's country, after two or three turns at such a game as that!"

Having thus delivered himself, Joel Brystone turned to the mate, and ordered him to call the hands to shorten sail, and make all snug for the night, as a "sneezer" was evidently coming on. He himself took the wheel. I dived below out of the way, and was soon, spite of creaking timbers and a roaring sea, in a sound sleep, and dreaming of ——

"Precisely." And that capital guess of yours suggests to me that Ruth Garstone's pretty face was not more changeful in its aspect of smiles and frowns, candour and coquettishness, than is the equally capricious Euxine in passing from wildest fury to gentlest calm. The morning showed no trace of the previous night's gale, save in the slowly subsiding wave-swell, through which the *Saucy Gipsy*, feebly sustained by a light, fitful breeze, helplessly pitched

and rolled. The wind freshened about noon, continued fair; and early the next morning the low flat shore of Kalamita Bay, on the south-west coast of the Crimea, close by the northern horn of which nestles the old Tatar town of Koslov, now Eupatoria, was visible from the deck. It was still far away, however, on our larboard beam, stretching southward in sinuous outline to Cape Cherson, and backed up by the hill-region of the peninsula, which, rising precipitately on the south, reaches inland as far as Simferopol, whence a vast steppe or plain extends in unbroken sterility to Perekop. As the day advanced, Eupatoria and the villages along the coast lit up into clearer distinctness; the hill-tops to the south and east sparkled with sun-fire; and by-and-by we could discern, through the glass, numbers of country-people busy getting in the harvest, with the help of camels and bullock-carts. Everything betokened peace, quiet, security, utter ignorance, or utter carelessness, of the storm of war about to burst upon them. Not a soldier was to be seen, unless some fellows riding about upon ponies, with what to us looked like slender rods, borne in an upright position, or across their saddles, were lance-armed Cossacks. This strange apathy or disdain called forth numerous, and far from complimentary, comments from Joel Brystone, especially after we opened up Sebastopol, and he had counted from the mast-head the numerous fleet skulking idly there. "A tremendous strong fortress though, this Sebastopol!" he

added, "as that fellow Hartmann said, and about the only sensible thing he did say : not a place to be taken by the collar even by the Western Colossians."

"Western Colossi, was it not?"

"Colossi or Colossians," rejoined the captain, "it comes to pretty much the same thing, I believe—which is, that the British and Frenchers will find Sebastopol a cussed hard nut to crack." So saying, and feeling, I could see, a little pouty at having the correctness of his language questioned, the commander.

the *Saucy Gipsy* walked away.

The following day, the *Saucy Gipsy* dropped her anchor in Yalta roadstead ; and, after the brig had been boarded and ransacked by an inferior crew of officials, we were visited by a sort of amphibious officer, inasmuch as, although a seaman by profession, as he told us, he wore a soldier's uniform, and called himself Major Kriloff. A civil sort of person the major proved to be, after satisfying himself of the genuineness of our nationality, and the legitimacy of our purpose in visiting the Czar's dominions. That civility grew instantly to graciousness when he was shown the letter to Prince Menschikoff, with the wax impressed by Mr. Brown's official signet. There would, he said, be some difficulty in obtaining an interview with his Excellency, who was just then incessantly occupied in marshalling the Imperial forces for the signal chastisement of the sacrilegious allies of the Turk ; but every consideration, consistent with the military and police regula-

tions, would meanwhile be shown to a gentleman officially commended to the prince by the representative of a great, friendly power. "The delay will not be very long," added the major; "for his Excellency will quickly finish with the audacious invaders, should they, which I think doubtful, be mad enough to set foot upon Russian territory."

Captain Brystone, who understood French very well, though he did not speak it, gave a sarcastic sniff at hearing this; and I assured the major there was little doubt that the Allies really meant landing in the Crimea, and shortly too."

"So much the better," he briskly replied: "they come to their graves!—though not in one sense, for we shall toss them like dead dogs into the sea," added the gallant officer, tossing down a bumper of champagne emblematically at the same time. "The French," continued the major, kindling with the subject, "the heroic children of the Czar chased before them like sheep in 1812: and a very intelligent countryman of yours assures me, that the English soldiers will be panic-stricken at the mere sight of our invincible veterans!"

"A countryman of ours?"

"Yes; that is, a naturalised American, though a German by descent—a most intelligent person, I assure you. He has given me a lively description of your famous battle of New Orleans, where he tells me General Jackson, with only about fourteen hundred

American militia, put to rout a whole host—upwards of twenty thousand English regulars—though posted behind walls of cotton-bags! He himself was a very young drummer-boy at the time, and helped to beat the advance at the decisive bayonet-charge. His name is Karl Hartmann. Perhaps you know him.”

“Well!” exclaimed Brystone, as soon as he could fetch breath—mine was quite gone—and bringing his fist down upon the table with tremendous force—“well! if that don’t bang Barnum, I’ll be ——.”

The major, not understanding English, evidently mistook the captain’s words and action for a vehement confirmation of Karl Hartmann’s bulletin of the battle, for he immediately said: “I am happy to find you can corroborate my friend’s statement. One of the most agreeable, gentlemanlike men I have ever met with is Karl Hartmann, and an ardent admirer of Russia and her glorious Emperor. He has been confined to his hotel by a slight indisposition for the last five or six days, or I should have endeavoured to bring him with me; but as you, Mr. Henderson, are going on shore with me, I shall have much pleasure in presenting you to each other.”

“Thank you, Major Kriloff, but Mr. Hartmann and I are old acquaintances. I shall be very glad to see him, let me add.”

The major was delighted to hear that, and soon afterwards we landed in company on Yalta pier. Yalta is, or was, a favourite resort of the Russian families

who during the summer visit the Crimea; and, previous to the entry of the allied fleets into the Black Sea, a steamer plied regularly twice a week between it and Odessa, touching at Sebastopol on its way. The town is partly built upon the plateau and western side of a rather lofty promontory, and runs considerably inland through a charming valley sheltered on each side by wooded heights. Many of the houses are built up the hill-side in a kind of step-terrace fashion, the flat roofs of a lower tier forming a promenade to the tier above. The permanent inhabitants are, I believe, chiefly Russians and Greeks, though the Tatar element of the Crimean population—chiefly agriculturists, sullen, swarthy fellows, with high cheek-bones, flat, spreading noses, and narrow, long, cunning eyes—were numerous enough about the streets; and now and then a woman of that race shuffled past, her features concealed by white cotton bandages. The main street was full of soldiers, drawn up in heavy marching order; and of course Major Kriloff was inexhaustibly voluble in his admiration of their fine soldierly appearance—an estimate which, though I did not endorse, I took care not to contradict; and the patriotic monologue terminated only at the door of the principal hotel, where temporarily resided Mr. Karl Hartmann, and where the courteous major left me, after readily promising to return and dine with me and “*ce cher Hartmann*,” whose appetite, it appeared, was not in the slightest

degree affected by the ailment which confined him within doors.

Karl Hartmann's indisposition, as I suspected, was a mere pretence, except in so far that an unexpected incident had in some slight degree shaken his steel-strung nerves.

"The truth is, my dear Mark," said he, with an effort at familiar frankness, as soon as we had shaken hands—"for in future there must be no concealments between you and me—that I chanced to meet a fellow the other evening who I thought was a thousand miles away. Had he recognised me as I did him, and my revolver had not put in effectual bail for its owner, as I daresay it might have done, I should have been strung up in a trice to the nearest tree, or, had he chanced to be in a very gracious mood, have been despatched to the other world with military honours—*videlicet*, a close volley and a dozen bullets through my head."

"Nonsense! This must be a reckless, extravagant jest, like your drummer-boy doings at the battle of New Orleans."

He laughed out, the light, merry laugh of a light-hearted, merry boy. "Krilloff has told you of that already, has he? Well, he is one in authority here: it was desirable to win his favour, and I have succeeded in doing so to admiration, by simply humouring his prejudices. But as to the *rencontre* I was speaking of, and its possible consequences, all that is true as doom."



"What crime, then, have you committed, or been charged with?"

"None whatever! I mean no moral crime—one against the military code only. It thus fell out. You are aware that I once held the Czar's commission?"

"No; but I have heard that Dalzell did."

"I served in the same regiment with Dalzell, and he and I were not only bosom-friends and brother-officers, but, in conjunction with one Basil Ypslanti, a wealthy Greek, brother-contractors. We were stationed in Bessarabia at the time, and, both knowing something of military engineering, we, after much ado, obtained a contract for some extensive works connected with the defences of Ismail. The affair wound up disastrously, Ypslanti, whose name did not appear in the business, having cheated us outrageously in the purchase of material. This we were as certain of as that we had life and breath, but legal proof thereof was difficult; and one of the consequences was, that General Korkasoff, meeting me one day about a mile outside of Ismail, called me, after asking a few questions, '*un sacré escroc.*' He was on horseback, and accompanied by an officer of his staff—the man I met the other evening. I also was on horseback. Now, in my mildest mood I could hardly have tamely borne being called a cheat; but at that moment my brain was in a whirl of fiery excitement from wine and loss by play; and the offensive epithet had scarcely left the general's

lips, when I answered it by a fierce stroke across his face with a stout riding-whip, followed by a shower of blows, which, aided by astonishment at the incredible audacity of such an attack, deprived him of all power of resistance. The aide-de-camp was at first equally stupified and paralysed, but, presently rallying his startled senses, he drew his sword, and rode at me, shouting, as he did so, to an infantry picket not far off. I parried his thrust, and returned it by a blow on his head that must have set it ringing for some time, and to divers tunes; then set spurs to my horse, and, being capitably mounted, went off like the wind. I escaped, and found my way to America, where I read in the *Invalide Russe* that, as usual with deserters, I had been tried in my absence by court-martial, and condemned to death, '*mort infamante*,' which in the vulgate is *sus. per col.* You think, no doubt," he added, "that I must be crazy to come here under such circumstances, and perhaps it was an act of madness; but something, I thought, might be trusted to the fact, that the corps to which I belonged is now stationed in Poland; to the change produced in my appearance by difference of years, dress, the absence of beard, moustaches, and so on. Besides, the inveterate gamester ever delights in *le grand jeu*, though his stake be his own life."

"Yes, I can understand that, when the possible gain is in some degree commensurate with the possible loss; but in the present case, you hazard your life for positively nothing—as regards yourself."

"May be so ; but the cards are dealt, and the game must be played out. And now to other and more pressing topics. Gabriel Derjarvin, half-Tatar, half-Russ—Ypslanti's executor and trustee—is, I find, a much greater rascal than I had supposed, and I allowed a wide margin too. He will give us plenty of trouble, if nothing worse. He is now, I believe, at Simferopol ; and there or elsewhere we must seek, find, and try conclusions with him. Your aunt, Mrs. Dalzell, and her daughter, are lately gone, he tells me, and by his advice, to reside for a time in Sebastopol."

"Sebastopol ! To a place about to be besieged—perhaps stormed !"

'An entirely absurd supposition, my good young man," replied Hartmann, with an explosion of bitter mirth. "A grand council of war has been held, at which the programme of the coming campaign has been definitively settled. It runs thus :—The Allies are to be permitted to leave the safe security of their ships, to find their presumptuous march arrested before one of the formidable positions in the vicinage of Sebastopol, whence hurled back, discomfited, overthrown, amazed, by the Russian hosts, all those who escape the sword will be drowned in the sea ; a modern illustration, according to a printed address, signed by the archimandrite of Odessa, of the catastrophe which in ancient times overtook swine possessed of devils. Of course, the unsavoury similitude offends your British olfactories—well, on the father's side at any rate, if not

on the mother's—but it is not the less certain for all that—that—dinner is served, and Major Kriloff impatient to fall to. Come along, Master Henderson."

In the forenoon of the following day, Karl Hartmann, Major Kriloff, and I, set out for Simferopol, Menschikoff's head-quarters, in a *tarantas*—a two-horse vehicle, consisting of a coupé and a box-seat. I was not quite sure whether the major looked upon us as companions or captives—possibly as both; but it was very plain that he did not intend to lose sight of *me* till the genuineness of the letter to the Prince had been verified. He was exceedingly gracious, however; and travelling in the Crimea under his authoritative guidance was much more expeditious and agreeable than it might have been had we journeyed alone. And a delightful drive it was, through one of the most placidly picturesque regions it is possible to imagine: fertile valleys, shut in with finely wooded heights; one—that of Baidar, some ten miles long by five in width—cultivated like a garden, and waving with luxuriant crops of wheat, rye, millet, tobacco, interspersed with plantations of vine, mulberry, quince, pomegranate, apple trees: mountain table-lands, or plateaux, called *yailas* by the Tatars, rich in summer-pasture, and covered with long-tailed sheep, buffaloes, camels, and horses. The numerous Tatar huts of lime-washed clay, are, for the most part, built amidst patches of mulberry, walnut, or other fruit-trees. At that season of the year, green tobacco-leaf was hanging

to dry upon rough trellis-work in front of most of them. Upon several of the flat roofs, Tatar girls were winnowing corn; and other industries—turning, for example, with a bow and string—are pursued after a like primitive fashion. The day was splendid, and the sunlit panorama of valley, mountain, forest, river, was further enlivened by the glittering arms and accoutrements of numerous bodies of military, horse and horse-artillery chiefly, galloping past on the direct road, or glancing across a distant opening in the forest—all hurrying westward, to share in the coming triumph of the Russian arms. At Baghtsche-serai, the ancient residence of the Tatar khans, where we slept, or rather should have slept, if permitted by the swarms of fleas, cockroaches, with a sprinkling of scorpions, domiciled hereditarily in the bed-rooms, the same excitement and exultation appeared to pervade the soldiery temporarily halting there; whilst the scowling looks of the Tatar habitants seemed to express a savage hope, controlled by equally savage, servile fear. Major Kriloff introduced us to a party of Russian officers, who were all, and quite naturally, brimming over with indignation at the threatened insult to the sacred soil of Russia. Their eager talk and questioning referred not so much to the French, who, in connection with the campaign of 1812, they affected to hold very cheap, as to the English, with whom they had not yet measured swords, and certainly Hartmann fooled them upon the subject to the

top of their bent. His precious battle of New Orleans, which always stirred my bile, by the ridiculous version it gave of a really creditable affair, absurdly overpuffed as it may have been by old Hickory's partisan admirers, was repeated over and over again, with never-ending variations; and by midnight, when the reckoning for champagne—towards which they would not hear of our contributing a cent—must have reached a handsome figure, it was firmly impressed upon every confused brain there that the English of these days, though still formidable at sea, were as inept as Chinese at land-fighting, and would certainly scamper off at the first flash of the Russian bayonets. Hartmann was in his glory, and concluded the evening's entertainment as follows:—

"I think you hinted just now," said he, confidentially addressing the only Russian officer remaining in the room—and who, it had struck me, was very young-looking for his rank—"I think you hinted a short time ago that, your uncle being a general of division, you could have your gallant Arofsky regiment placed in whatever part of the field seemed likely to yield the thickest crop of laurels?"

"I have little doubt I could."

"In which case," continued Hartmann, "I can give you useful counsel: no thanks, my dear Colonel Softenuff, I"—

"Puhmpenuff"—this is no word-play of mine; Puhmpenuff is a well-known Russian surname—"Puhmpenuff, if you please, Monsieur Hartmann."

"Ah, *oui*, Puhmpenuff—a highly distinguished name, it struck me at first."

"One of the *most* distinguished names in the empire," said Puhmpenuff, stroking his moustache complacently.

"And very deservedly so, I have no doubt," rejoined Hartmann; "but, returning to the counsel or advice I have to give you. It must, to begin with, be clear to you that my opinion of the qualities and composition of an English army is entitled to respect; I, who, when a mere boy, assisted—so far as vigorously beating the *pas de charge* can be called assisting—a mere handful, comparatively speaking, of my countrymen to rout and pepper twenty thousand English red-coats, intrenched though they were behind ramparts of cotton-bales."

"Thirty thousand, you said just now," remarked the colonel.

"Did I? Well, I daresay there might have been thirty thousand; but the truth is, they ran so fast that it was difficult to ascertain their numbers with more than approximate accuracy. To proceed, however. Although nineteen out of twenty of the British soldiers you will soon be in face of have never in their lives heard a gun fired in anger, and won't stop when they do to hear a second, there are, you must bear in mind, two or three regiments which, as a matter of prudence, should be avoided. Not—understand me, Colonel Puhmpenuff—that I for a moment believe a soldier of your heroic name and chivalrous character

cares one straw how brave or how numerous may be the enemies opposed to him: but it is your duty to economise the blood of your valiant Arofskys, prodigal as you may be of your own."

"*Certainement.* There I agree with you entirely, Monsieur Hartmann."

"The regiments I allude to are those that have seen service in India"—

"India!" interrupted the colonel—"I know—we shall go there some day."

"To be sure you will, and back again!" exclaimed Hartmann with a burst which I saw rather startled the colonel, wine-wildered as he was. "You and your Arofskys are just the fellows to do that; and here"—tossing off a glass of champagne—"here's wishing with all my heart and soul that I may live to be there, and give them a hearty welcome when they do go. But I shall never finish if you interrupt me so. The question remains, how to discover which are those India regiments, and I confess I hardly know how that is to be done. There is, however, one plain course to pursue, which will answer the purpose of that knowledge. You must pit the Arofskys against the show-soldiers who never go abroad, and have no more fight in them than hares. They are brigaded together, I see by the papers, and you cannot fail to recognise them. Half of them, and the tallest fellows—six feet of bad stuff every one of them—all wear bear-skin caps; the others wear petticoats."



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"Petticoats! *Allons donc!*"

"But I say they do; and not so much as a pair of drawers beneath! There is hardly a pin's difference between the bear-skin caps and them, but I should recommend the petticoats for choice. Good-night, Colonel Puhmpenuff. Should you not," added Hartmann, "be able yourself to profit by the hint I have given you, impart it to such of your friends as may be able to do so, with my compliments, and if they don't ever afterwards remember me in their prayers, they are not the men I take them for—— Ha! Major Kriloff! you here!"

I was even more startled than Hartmann at suddenly confronting that officer, as we rose from our chairs. He had, I was sure, been silently standing there some time; had heard, and, his lowering visage convinced me, appreciated Hartmann's mocking persiflage. He betrayed neither anger nor suspicion by words—contenting himself with telling a lie instead: "I have this moment stepped in to remind you both that we start at dawn of day. Good-night again, messieurs."

"Well, Mr. Hartmann," said I, as soon as we were alone, "that reckless, gibing tongue of yours cannot be governed, it seems, even by the menace of a halter or a levelled row of muskets! For the future, you may be sure that Major Kriloff will not only be our gaoler, but an indefatigable spy over all our motions."

"Possibly; but don't be angry. I would not, and

luckily I cannot, compromise you ; and I am, as you say, reckless—mad ! or nearly so. In fact, Mark Henderson," he went on to say, " I have a strong presentiment that, do what I may, I *must* lose the game—the game of life—I am playing here. Well thought of ! " he added, taking a small sealed packet of papers from his breast-pocket. " You had better at once take charge of these papers. They will inform you of everything it is necessary you should know relative to your Aunt Viola and myself ; the understanding being, remember, that you do not break the seal of the envelope whilst I am alive and at liberty. And now let us try to sleep."

We reached Simferopol (formerly Akmedshid), a mean, straggling town, situated in a valley near the source of the tiny Salghir, early in the afternoon of the following day. The inhabitants we found in a state of panic-terror, ill concealed in the presence of strangers by a show of contemptuous bravado ; news having arrived that the Allies had actually landed in great force near Eupatoria. Menschikoff had set out for the scene of expected action a week previously ; and, as nothing less than an order from the Prince himself could procure us admittance into Sebastopol, the disappointment was a vexatious, depressing one. Major Kriloff proposed, or, more properly, decided, that we should follow the Prince to the head-quarters of the Russian army, which, he said, would not only procure

the required mandate much earlier than if we awaited his Excellency's return to Simferopol, but enable us to be eye-witnesses of the signal overthrow preparing for the impious abettors of the Crescent against the Cross. It was so settled; and after dinner Hartmann and I strolled, as if with no definite purpose, towards the Tatar division of the town (Ak-Metchet), where, if anywhere, Gabriel Derjarvin was to be found. A filthy, ill-kept, inodorous locality is Ak-Metchet, wherein the Helots of the Crimea seem to burrow rather than dwell. The narrow streets are neither paved nor lighted—the best shop-fronts are wooden shutters opening horizontally; and the principal coffee-house, to which we, with much difficulty, found our way, consisted of one large, low, dingy apartment, divided, by rudely carpentered railings, about three feet high, into compartments floored within, and crammed full of dirty, bearded, loose-robed, loose-slippered, hang-dog-looking fellows, each with a cherry-stick pipe in his mouth, smoking in apathetic sullenness round a low table, upon which stood a brazier containing lighted charcoal, and utensils of various shapes and sizes filled with ink-coloured coffee. As soon as Hartmann could distinctly discern faces through the thick, stifling atmosphere, he beckoned to about the only decent-looking, respectably-attired guest there, who at once rose and followed us into the street.

“This, Monsieur Derjarvin,” said Hartmann, stiffly, “is the American gentleman, Mr Mark Henderson.

who, I informed you, was expected here to make inquiries after his aunt, Madame Dalzell, and her daughter."

A constrainedly civil but sinister smile lurked about the man's eyes and lips whilst Hartmann was speaking: not a positively ill-looking countenance, but strongly indicative of the fellow's mixed origin. "*Grattez le Russe et vous verrez le Tartare*," said Napoleon; and a very slight scratching of the super-varnish would, it was abundantly plain, have made that discovery in the case of Gabriel Derjarvin.

"I should be most happy, sir," said Derjarvin, addressing himself directly to me, "to assist in furthering your pious views, were it in my power to do so; but the truth is, that Madame Dalzell, in order to consult and be near an eminent oculist, is gone with her daughter to reside in Sebastopol, where no stranger can, under present circumstances, be admitted. And they say, too," he added, with thinly masked insolence, "that Sebastopol will be soon besieged, perhaps stormed, in which case God only knows what may happen."

"You mean," said Hartmann in a calm voice, though his face was white, and his frame quivering with scorn, hate, rage—"you mean that Madame Dalzell and her daughter may be killed; in which case Ypslanti's legacy might remain in the hands of the trustee."

"It certainly," replied Derjarvin with a devilish jeer, "would not pass to the dastard husband, who"—

"Hartmann!" I interrupted, with difficulty arresting the uplifted hand, that would in another moment have dashed Derjarvin to the ground; "for Heaven's sake, control yourself! And you, sir," I added in French, "might avoid insulting an absent man, and this gentleman's friend."

"Is truth an insult?" he retorted. "Yes, in this instance, I admit, the bitterest that could be offered! I shall endeavour," he added, "to acquaint Madame Dalzell with the interesting fact, that her nephew, having heard of the happy change in his aunt's fortunes, has arrived in the Crimea with the amiable object of cultivating her acquaintance. And now, au plaisir, messieurs, I happen to have important business to transact within." He then re-entered the café.

"I am glad," said Hartmann, as soon as his choking rage permitted speech—"I am glad you did not tell the scoundrel of your introduction to Prince Menschikoff."

"It was as well, perhaps; but there is something of much more importance. Does Gabriel Derjarvin know who you are?"

"No, I think not; but it may be that he suspects. You, at all events, he cannot harm, nor ultimately baffle. And there are reasons why he would not denounce me, even if he were sure—— He knows, too, if he knows anything, that he plays with his own life who threatens mine—— Major Kriloff!" In turning the corner of a street, we had come full butt upon the major. He was slightly confused, but for a moment only.

"Ah, messieurs," said he, "you are like me, then, out for a quiet stroll; and a curious, tumble-down part of the town it is we have hit upon. I shall soon rejoin you at the hotel."

"Dogged!" I exclaimed, as soon as we were out of hearing, "as I told you we should be. Depend upon it, he will find out whom we have been talking with, and have a chat himself with Derjarvin!"

"Very likely; but I am, as you see, fastened to the stake, and, bear-like, *must* fight the course. The end is in the stars."

We rose before the dawn, and were on the road to the Russian camp before Tchatir-Dagh, the loftiest of the Crimean mountains, displayed his morning sun-crown. The weather continued fine, though, as we neared our destination, the state of the roads showed that rain had recently fallen in that part of the country. The district through which we were passing was a pleasant, diversified one, very similar to that before described, with the addition, that openings in the hills gave now and then to view patches of blue, glittering sea in the distance, shut in again, almost as soon as caught, by the devious road; but, with the exception of the ubiquitous Cossacks, we saw no soldiers whatever: they were all, no doubt, concentrated for the now imminent conflict. About noon on our second day's journey—the reader must understand that we did not travel with the speed of a mail-coach over a macadamised road—we heard the booming of

distant cannon, which the major and I took to be the commencement of that conflict, but which Hartmann pronounced to be merely artillery-practice, not a sustained battle cannonade—two very different things. His opinion we afterwards knew to be a correct one. The firing we heard was that of the Russian guns at the Alma, trying their range over the ground which the Allies must necessarily pass in assailing the Russian position.

We reached that position on the eve of the memorable battle; when Major Kriloff, first giving us in strict charge to a subaltern, peremptorily demanded my letter to Prince Menschikoff, with which he forthwith disappeared through the dense masses of soldiery, in the direction of two or three white tents near the centre of the encampment, and the only ones I saw.

A solemn, fearful, thrilling sight was that which presented itself upon the now historic heights of Alma, and the acclivity beyond that river—a space easily, from the vantage-ground upon which we stood, swept throughout its whole extent by the naked eye—yet within which narrow verge a hundred thousand combatants were already marshalled. Here, the sullen satellites of the Czar; yonder, the eager soldiers of the West, armed with all the modern enginery of war—offerings of science at the shrine of Moloch—and impatient for the signal that would launch them at each others' throats. Who shall foretell the issue of the coming strife—dare predict aught thereof, save

that the now fast-sinking sun, whose receding rays are at this moment but faintly reflected from bayonet-points, glittering epaulettes, and the bright scarlet uniforms of the British array, fronting the Russian right and centre, will to-morrow light thousands of brave fools to dark, untimely graves !

It was thus the raw youth, fresh from his father's home, felt rather than reasoned. The war-accustomed soldier by my side, a stranger to such commonplaces, felt and argued after another fashion ; and whilst I was awed, oppressed, by the magnitude, the mightiness of the spectacle, with its bodeful associations, its dire shadows cast before, he was coolly mastering its details, weighing the advantages or otherwise of the rival positions in a purely military sense ; and when I turned sharply towards him, startled, shocked in my sentimental mood by the ringing tone in which he spoke, I read in Captain Dalzell's brightly-flushing face and sparkling eyes—I had for some time quite made up my mind as to who Karl Hartmann really was—that the soldiers of the West, those ranks of red especially, my father's countrymen, were not, as I had feared, doomed to inevitable defeat.

“Before this hour to-morrow, Master Henderson,” said he, “a great fact, which, indeed, none but fools have ever questioned—but then fools are so large a majority everywhere—namely, the immense physical and moral superiority of the western to the northern and eastern races of Europe in the present day—will



have received a new and brilliant illustration, and a new and brilliant page of military history will also have been inscribed by the victorious swords of France and England. And worthy of those great deeds is the magnificent theatre in which they will be performed—magnificent in a soldier sense as well as in natural grandeur. Let me sketch it in rough outline, so that, when you return to America, you may be able to describe to your aunt and father—and the Saucy Gipsy of course—a position which twenty thousand of our, of their race would have held against a world; but from which, to-morrow, you will see some fifty thousand Russians driven like sheep.”

“There is an adage, Mr. Hartmann, relative to slaying the bear before you sell its skin.”

“And a very respectable adage it is,” rejoined the confident soldier; “but, spite of its ancient wisdom, we will take the liberty, for once, of forestalling the spoil, now that the Lion and the Eagle are so close upon the quarry. But with respect to this position of Menschikoff’s: really, it speaks highly for the old fellow’s military judgment, particularly as he is only a sea-officer by profession. We are standing on the ridge, and at about the centre, of a vast and rugged amphitheatre, shut in seaward by precipitous cliffs, and on the right by hilly ground, fissured by impassable rifts. This amphitheatre slopes roughly, jumpingly down to a river, which my obliging friend, the officer in whose charge or custody we are left, informs me is

called the Alma. Now, these heights cannot be less than three hundred feet above the level of that river; whilst the surface of the slope is, moreover, you perceive, broken into sharp ridges, rugged ravines scooped out by winter floods. On this side of the river, and in front of the British position, is a scattered village, vine-fields, and other wooded cover, occupied, my friend informs me, by thousands, but say hundreds of riflemen. In addition to these defences, many earthworks have been thrown up, and batteries of heavy cannon so placed as to sweep every practicable way of approach."

"How, then, are the Allies to attack a force so posted with any chance of success?"

"The 'how,' my young friend, presents itself very simply. The French on the right of the Allies, their own right resting on the sea, will, I apprehend, if the cliffs are accessible seaward, endeavour to scale them, under cover of the ships' guns, and turn the Russian left. The British have nothing for it but to fairly take the bull by the horns, ford the river in their front, clear the village and wood, and charge boldly up these broken, hilly, cannon-swept heights. The bayonet will make a road."

Having so far settled the affair to his own satisfaction, Mr. Hartmann turned to "my friend," the Russian sabalturn, with whom he immediately commenced an animated conversation in Russ.

Meanwhile, evening, with its calming, subduing

power, was falling over all things, the vast, restless masses of men around us inclusive ; and gradually the deafening Babel of shouts, orders, imprecations, the measured march of armed men, the gallop of horse, the hurrying to and fro, the bugle-calls, the roll of drums, all subsided to comparative silence, and was succeeded by a low, wide-spread hum and murmur of many voices, varied now and then by peals of laughter or rough snatches of song, as the men settled themselves for the night. Presently, innumerable 'watch-fires glanced brightly forth, and, repeated in the distant French and English bivouacs, seemed to meet and mingle with the lights of the firmament.

"The next time, Mark," curtly observed Hartmann, "the bright stars look down upon this particular spot of earth, their lovers' light will fall upon sounder sleepers than the wearied fellows that will to-night dream around their watch-fires. Really a splendid night though, but deuced chilly ! I hope Major Kriloff will soon turn up. Oh, here he comes."

The major apologised for his long absence. It was only after much delay that he could obtain a few moments' interview with the Prince. "Your letter, Mr. Henderson," he added, with double-refined politeness, "is entirely satisfactory ; but his Excellency will not be able to see you personally till after to-morrow's battle—I might say, since of that there can be no doubt whatever, to-morrow's victory and, gentlemen, I have further to say, that Colonel Puhmpenuff sends

his compliments, and will be glad of your company for an hour or two this evening."

"We accept the invitation with the greatest pleasure," promptly replied Hartmann. "Come along, Mark! Depend upon it, my lad," he added, as we followed a few paces behind the major, "that if there is a snug, snoozy bivouac to be had on such a field as this, a rich Puhmpenuff will be sure to have secured it."—Colonel Puhmpenuff, who *was* snugly bivouacked, received us very cordially, and we made a convivial night of it, no one appearing to think of bed. The colonel himself, however, though I suppose as brave as others, seemed ill at ease after a while; and more than once, when he thought himself unobserved, I noticed him rapidly make the sign of the cross, and, judging by the motion of his lips, ejaculate a prayer. Poor fellow! the shadow of a near and premature death chilled and depressed his boding spirit.

With the first rays of the dawn, the *réveille* rang through the Russian host, which immediately started into life and activity. Major Kriloff procured three Cossack horses for himself and us, and a clump of Cossacks proper, to escort or guard us; and, bidding farewell to our hospitable entertainer, we took our way to some high ground, not far from the village of Almatomak, and near the Russian centre, which commanded a view of a large portion of the field. Breakfast over, the troops—green infantry, green artillery, green cannon, green tumbrils, green cavalry, with the exception

of a few squadrons of dragoons clothed in white—took up their assigned positions, and immediately numerous processions of splendidly habited popes or priests, bearing sacred pictures, passed slowly before the lines of kneeling soldiers, blessing them with uplifted, outstretched hands, and no doubt appropriate words, though these were inaudible ; a reverential roll of the drums, as if muffled, continuing throughout the ceremony—which over, the pictures and popes were sent to the rear, out of the range of heterodox cannon-balls. There were no colours that I saw, and the officers concealed their rank and honours beneath the gray great-coats of the common soldier—a useless, as well as degrading device, according to Hartmann ; an officer, armed with a sword, being always easily distinguishable from the musket-bearing rank-and-file, particularly if he does his duty—that of encouraging and rallying his men.

The oppressive pause which followed the close of the religious ceremonial, was at length broken by the booming of heavy artillery, far away on the Russian left. This proved to be the guns of the fleet supporting the attempt of the French to scale the cliffs on that side, as Hartmann had anticipated. Mounted officers were soon galloping to and fro ; large bodies of troops moved off to sustain and strengthen the Russian resistance ; and the struggle in that quarter rapidly developed itself. The English, meanwhile, after having some time before closely approached the

Alma, lay motionless upon the ground, partially concealed from view by the inequalities of its surface, their left terminated by a brilliant body of cavalry, though numbering only—Hartmann reckoned—about a thousand sabres. Fiercer with every passing minute grew the din of battle on the left; still the English gave no sign, and this, to me, inexplicable tardiness to engage, sent the hot blood in a gallop through my veins. Hartmann was also greatly agitated: his face as white as paper, his eyes aflame with excitement; and even Kriloff was indulging himself with a jest at the scarlet soldiers' expense, when he was silenced by a shout like an explosion from Hartmann, followed by—"The British bugles at last! Now for the tug of war!"

As the words left his lips, the red-coated battalions rose up out of the earth, as it were—formed, with the Rifles in front, the artillery in the intervals of divisions—and with banners displayed, came on in all the pomp and glory of war. I can merely indicate by a few brief pen-strokes, my own very partial experience of the battle itself. The Rifles had, I judged, reached the river when the hurricane of fire reserved for that moment burst forth, and must, it seemed to me, have swept away every soldier within range; and how, I asked myself, shall men of mortal mould withstand, defy, that continuous, incessant iron tempest? Yet to my amazement did the volleyed thunder of the invisible battle, the war-cloud of driving smoke and glancing

flame, which shrouded the actual combatants—manifestly advance up the cannon and rifle swept heights, in vast whirling eddies, as it were, for a moment driven back, again sweeping onwards, and opening; dividing; lifting into rifts, layers, of flame-smoke! And there gave indistinctly to view, crowds of men struggling together in confused masses, or writhing on the ground—lines of flashing bayonets, of shakos, bear-skin caps, Highland bonnets; while the uproar of shrieks, yells, imprecations, cheers, was maddened, so to speak, by the crashing thunder of an artillery which for a long time seemed to multiply itself with the exigencies of the fearful strife. Thus confused and fragmentary, but vivid, was my individual impression of the battle of the Alma. Yet, fascinated as I was by the dread spectacle, I well remember to have felt, after the first quarter of an hour, an instinctive conviction that the rout of the Russians, in a given time, so many minutes more or less, was the assured, the immutable conclusion of the furious struggle—a conviction which, as the day advanced, was shared by the Russians themselves. This was evident from the exclamations of rage and astonishment I heard on all sides; the galloping of mounted officers here and there, without purpose or result; the hurrying far to the rear of wounded officers rescued from the *mêlée*; and, by-and-by, from the anxious withdrawal, beyond chance of capture, of the numerously-horsed artillery. Whilst I was rooted, as it were, to one spot, Hartmann was moving restlessly about—to

the extent of the tether permitted by a dozen Cossacks, who never left him for an instant—in a state of wild excitement. Twice only during the battle did I hear his voice; once, soon after its commencement, exclaiming: “They have fired the village! Fools! they should have held it with their teeth.” And again, just as the hour of final victory and defeat was about to strike: “This way, Mark!” cried he; “only for a moment, or you will miss the grandest act of the play, and about the last too, for on this side in a few minutes it will be, or I am much deceived, *exeunt omnes*.” I mechanically obeyed in time to see, in the direction to which he pointed, on the right of the position, a vast and solid mass of Russian infantry drawn up in reserve in the rear of a battery, cleft, riven asunder by two pieces of heavy artillery brought to bear upon them from a near eminence, at point-blank range; and to hear the tumultuous yell of mortal agony, rising high above the general roar of the battle, till, at the third or fourth discharge, the serried mass, which there was no attempt to deploy into line, broke asunder, and fled in confusion and dismay. On the left, the French battle had been equally successful and decisive, though by no means so obstinate or bloody; and presently a thundering cheer, heralding the swift advance of a line of flashing steel along the whole British front, completed the panic of the Russians, who, giving way in all directions, were in a few minutes, with the exception of their numerous cavalry, who made a show, and a show only,



of interposing between the victors and the vanquished—a mob of terror-stricken fugitives, throwing away muskets, knapsacks, even shuffling off their heavy boots as they ran in their frenzied flight.

“There go the valiant Russ!” exclaimed Hartmann, “as I told you they would, like a flock of frightened sheep; and our friends here are naturally impatient to follow; so come along, Mark, or some of the unrespecting bullets flying about may chance to mistake you for one of the runaways. Hi! hi! hip, hip, hurrah!” shouted the untamable man, as he set spurs to his horse, flourished his cane above his head, and rode off at the head of the wondering but watchful Cossacks.

Kriloff had absquatulated some time before, and we did not see him again till the second day after the battle; by which time, something like order was restored among the Russian troops. He came to say, that Prince Menschikoff was about to move with the bulk of his army in the direction of Simferopol; and that he, the major, Hartmann, and myself, would set out direct for Sebastopol in an hour from that time. He had not left us more than ten minutes, when a subaltern of the Arofsky regiment came to say, that Colonel Puhmpenuff, who was in *extremis*, desired to see us immediately. We found the good-natured, if not very bright, young officer extended on the green-sward, his head propped up by knapsacks, and evidently upon the threshold of his last long home. He was dying from a hurt in the hip, received at the

Alma, which, from improper treatment, had gangrened. He had a letter in his hand, which he placed, with a faint smile, in Hartmann's.

"Deliver this," he slowly murmured, "to Admiral Korniloff, my relative, at Sebastopol. He may befriend you: you will have need of friends. Kriloff, though a noble—Heaven pity such nobles!—is an agent of the secret police. He suspects you to be—bend down your ear—— Ha! As I feared, it is true! No matter; I who shall soon need mercy, would fain show some whilst yet I may. Kriloff but suspects, remember. He saw somebody at Simferopol who hinted—who hinted"—— He stopped suddenly; a shadow fell and rested upon his face; a slight shudder thrilled his frame; he faintly ejaculated: "Marie! God!" and died. The letter was directed in a female hand to himself; the envelope was stained with blood; and so was a lock of bright chestnut hair—the colour of Ruth's—which it contained.

On the following afternoon, Hartmann and I, with of course the inevitable major, took up our abode at the Hotel of the Marshals, Sebastopol, in the same line of street as the church of St. Vladimir. Hartmann had luckily obtained—from Derjarvin, I supposed—the address of the surgeon-oculist with whom Mrs. Dalzell was temporarily residing; and within an hour of our arrival I sent her, by the hotel gargon, the letters of which I was the bearer from America; one placed in

my hands at the last moment by Hartmann—"from her husband," he said; and a note, stating that I would myself wait upon her and my cousin Marian in about two hours from that time. This done, Hartmann and I went out for a stroll, closely watched within the place, we were quite sure; but egress from Sebastopol was wholly impossible without a guard at our heels.

Sebastopol is not a city: it is an immense fortress, and nothing else, of which the houses are troop-barracks, fortified with remarkable skill, and at an incredible cost.

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Hartmann," I remarked, "that Sebastopol is not a place to be taken by the collar, even by an Anglo-French army; and yet, judging from the confusion and terror everywhere visible, the Russians themselves seem to despair of a successful defence."

"The confusion is more apparent than real; and if what Kriloff reports is true—that a part of the fleet has been sunk, to block up the entrance to the harbour—a vigorous systematic defence has, you may be sure, been organised."

"You are of opinion, then, that the Allies will break their teeth upon this granite stronghold of the Czar?"

"Very likely. It is one thing to accept battle in the open field, and quite another to hold an enemy at bay from behind stone batteries and covered ramparts.

Worse troops than you and I saw beaten hand over hand the other day ought to hold Sebastopol against any amount of force. The successful defence of such places proves nothing. Napoleon broke his teeth, as you term it, upon Acre; Wellington, upon Burgos: but here we are at the Hotel des Maréchaux again."

"Remember," said Hartmann half an hour subsequently, as I was about to proceed to my Aunt Viola's, "not a word of Karl Hartmann, nor of any *suspicion* you may entertain. Good-bye. I shall be anxious for your return."

Ten minutes had not passed when my cousin Marian was in my arms—weeping, sobbing, lamenting; blessing, thanking Heaven all in a breath. Lamenting for her father's illness; blessing, thankful that her mother and herself would soon be near him—with him once again; it might be to aid in restoring him to life and health—to life and health in free, happy America—that far-off land of blessed promise, which she had so longed, yet dared hardly hope, to behold! And now, to dwell there with dear Aunt Garstone—a name that had ever been to her a holy household word; with Cousin Ruth, whom she knew as well from her letter as if they had been from childhood inseparate sisters! "Too much! too much!" sobbed poor Marian—"a change too mighty, too blissful to be realised!"

It was too much for me, I know, who could say nothing, suggest nothing, do nothing, whilst that torrent of passionate utterance was pouring forth, but

ejaculate unintelligible vocables in choking sympathy. We calmed down at last; got our eyes dry enough to see through them; and, had I needed proof that Hartmann was Arthur Dalzell, it would have been abundantly supplied by Marian's face, which was a refined copy of her father's. Neither could it be doubted that a man so beloved by his wife and child must possess many good, many admirable qualities — dwarfed, hidden, overgrown, as they might be by the poison-plants that spring up so plentifully in the sensuous and ardent natures that lack or spurn the purifying discipline of self-control.

"That is mamma's bell," said Marian; "she is becoming impatient. Be very calm yourself, dear cousin," she whispered, "or you will renew her agitation, which, you may suppose, has been very great."

Marian opened a door very gently: a lady habited in mourning sat near a window, her pale, finely chiselled face, from which a lustre seemed to breathe, though the eyes gave no light, turned expectingly towards us.

"My nephew Mark," she said in Marian's silver accents, but more subdued, and sorrow-toned to the gentlest patience of expression—"My nephew Mark!" I was on my knees before her, clasping her slender hands, gazing up at her mild, seraph face, and marvelling no longer that my aunt Garstone held her still so freshly in remembrance, though divided from each other as they had been by more than thirty years of

wearing and tearing life. I need hardly say that the mother's words of welcome, of present grief, of hopeful anticipation, were essentially the same as her daughter's, though more soberly tinted. She would have set out at once—for were there not oculists as skilful as Dr. Isomine to be found in America?—but that she must perforce wait to see Gabriel Derjarvin, who was not expected in Sebastopol for some days to come. Presently our conversation assumed a more cheerful tone · we talked of Aunt Martha, my father, Ruth—and were building castles in the air by the dozen, when Dr. Isomine came in to say that the *rappel* had beaten—at which signal every one, not on duty, must forthwith betake himself to his home. Of course I immediately took leave.

There was still, spite of the *rappel*, much clangor and confusion in the streets, caused, it seemed, by the numbers of families of condition that were eager to escape, from the supposedly imminent assault by the Allies upon southern Sebastopol, to the comparative safety of the northern side of the great naval arsenal ; in furtherance of which natural desire, a bridge of boats had been moored across the main harbour.

I found Captain Dalzell, as I shall now call him, alone ; and at his request I related all that had passed in as nearly as I could remember the very words of the speakers. He listened with bowed head, and his face covered with his hands, in profound silence, marked, as much as broken, by a deep stifled groan which twice

or thrice escaped him. He made no remark in answer, and, after waiting awhile, I said :

"It is absolutely necessary, Captain Dalzell"—There was a movement of surprise, but he controlled himself. "It is absolutely necessary, Captain Dalzell, that immediate action should be taken in this most unhappy business."

"That is true," said he, raising his head and looking me sadly in the face ; "but what action—to what end?"

"I cannot say, ignorant as I am of the precise circumstances in which you are placed."

"Let me plainly state them then: I *am* Arthur Dalzell, ci-devant captain in the Czar's service, and now under sentence of *mort infamante*, for horse-whipping one of his generals. This, Kriloff knows—knows, not suspects only, as Colonel Puhmpenuff supposed. He and Derjarvin have had a second interview, the result of which was, that the two worthies agreed to keep my secret, upon condition that they be permitted to keep and divide the five thousand pounds bequeathed to my wife."

"Where could you learn all this?"

"From Major Kriloff's own lips, not half an hour since; uttered plainly, unblushingly, to my very face; but which of course would, if necessary, be as boldly, unblushingly denied. A legal acquittance, signed by Madame Dalzell, placed in his hands, the major was pleased to say in conclusion, and I might leave Sebastopol to-morrow."

"That penalty, then, for your exceeding rashness, Captain Dalzell, must be paid."

"Sir!" exclaimed Dalzell, springing fiercely up, as if about to strike me—"do you mean that, to save this worthless life of mine, I should beggar my wife and enrich Kriloff and his brother-scoundrel?"

"My Aunt Viola would not estimate the money at a feather's value in comparison with your safety."

"Better and better! It is an additional motive, is it, that I should cast a wife—a wife stricken with blindness—penniless upon the world, because she is not only a long-suffering, gentle, but a loving, all-forgiving woman! Nay, nay, Master Henderson, bad as I may be, I am not capable of the infamy you counsel. When I prove so, Derjarvin will *know* me to be the dastard you have heard him call me. And herein," he continued, for I, in fact, knew not what to say—"my will is its own lord; for if it happens that, by any means whatever, Mrs. Dalzell is wrought upon to comply with Kriloff and Derjarvin's terms, I will that moment denounce myself to the authorities, and proclaim the treason to the Czar of the confederate villains. They fear this; and therefore it is that they shrink from working upon my wife's feelings, except through me. This gives me time—perhaps a chance. Then Admiral Korniloff, whom I have called upon—the letter I placed in his hands was written by a niece of his, betrothed to poor Puhmpenuff—says he will gladly render me any service in his power."



"Pray Heaven these frail twigs may not fail you! But, should they, it would be sheer insanity to sacrifice your life to a vain"——

"Be it so!" peremptorily interrupted the wilful man. "We are all, as you have heard me say before, more or less insane. I, like Hamlet, am mad nor'-nor'-west; but when the wind is southerly—— You know the rest. Good-night!"

What to the purpose could be said or done, with so fearless and unreasoning a nature to deal with? I was at my wits' end—no very long journey, the reader may think—and fain to wait with what patience I could muster for the solution which Time would bring—the doleful Time, as it limped slowly past in a beleaguered city, wherein one seemed to breathe an atmosphere of peril, dismay, and death. Derjarvin failing to appear as he had appointed, my aunt and cousin urged immediate departure, the business of the legacy to be left in the hands of a respectable syndie; and I dared not hint at the reasons which forbade compliance with so sensible an arrangement. Next came the bombardment by sea and land, and amongst the victims of that fearful day was Admiral Korniloff, killed by the bursting of a shell. That frail hope gone, I once more essayed to shake Dalzell's resolution. Vainly, as before. My eager reasoning was water dashed against a rock. He was far, he said from the end of his resources yet. What his plan was, if he had one, I knew not. In fact, I rarely saw him,

except in the morning before he went out; but I knew his old vice of gaming had regained its ascendancy, by the frequent drafts he made on my purse; and I could refuse nothing to a dying man, as I firmly believed him to be. It was very likely, I thought, that the insanity of play had suggested the possibility of winning a sum sufficient to purchase the connivance of Kriloff and Derjarvin, without impinging upon his wife's fortune. Poor maniac!

And thus the weary days dragged on, bringing us to Saturday, the 4th November. The failure of the combined attack had inspired the Russians with new courage, which the constant arrival of reinforcements—the tidings that two Grand Dukes were on their way to Sebastopol—the lying bombast, widely placarded in French and Russ, pretendedly descriptive of the ever-memorable charge of the British light cavalry at Bala-klava—increased to exultant confidence. On that day, November the 4th, dull and gloomy as the weather was, Sebastopol seemed drunk with pride and anticipated victory. Triumphal music resounded on all sides; the church-bells rang out their merriest peals; the vociferous cheers of the soldiery gave savage chorus; and religion, simulated, unreal, assumed to order, like the other less solemn shams in progress, lent its aid to inflame the intoxication of the hour—processions of popes, as before the Alma, bearing holy pictures, and chanting Israel's psalms of triumph over the heathen, constantly passing and repassing along

the lines of devout and drunken troops, which in countless numbers thronged the streets.

Elbowing my way with difficulty back to the hotel from my aunt's, about nine o'clock in the evening, I found Captain Dalzell impatiently awaiting me. He was greatly excited—not, however, by wine.

"I am come, Mark," he said, "to bid you farewell. I leave Sebastopol in about four hours hence."

"Leave Sebastopol! You have arranged, then, with——with"——

"With Kriloff—yes. You start and blush, and I am glad you do; it is an involuntary justification of what you have termed my insanity. Reassure yourself. Your aunt Viola's husband is not yet fallen so low as to esteem base life above brave death. Kriloff and Co. will call here to-morrow evening to receive the legal acquittance for the legacy, when you will be free to deal with them, for, as I have already said, I quit Sebastopol long before the dawn "

"You speak parables."

"A few words will make my meaning clear. A great blow is about to be attempted against the beleaguering forces—a blow admirably planned, and, if successfully carried out, the star of England's military greatness will suffer grievous eclipse. Its main features may be thus described:—An immense force in infantry and artillery, variously estimated at from fifty to seventy thousand men, will assail the British position above Inkermann before daybreak. Should Men-

schikoff or the two Grand Dukes—I don't know who commands in chief—so far succeed as to extend a victorious hand across to Liprandi at Balaklava, the Crimean campaign will have terminated, and all that remain of the allied forces must re-embark—if they can."

"But surely there is no danger of such a catastrophe?"

"Much danger. The British position on the side of Inkermann is easily assailable, and the odds in numbers will be overwhelming. Should the Russians, under cover of the darkness, succeed in creeping up the slopes and ravines, and with their cannon gain the ridge of the heights unperceived, nothing but a miracle of war can give Raglan the victory. The British will be taken in flank, and it will be a long time before their own divisions on their left can be brought into action: the French will be still later. Still, if they are not surprised, a few thousand only of that astonishing infantry may make a stubborn fight of it till help comes."

"But how—I really don't understand"—

"What this has to do with my leaving Sebastopol? Just this: by the favour of Major Bovinski, a Pole by birth, whom you have heard me often speak of lately, I accompany his regiment as a volunteer, in the van of one of the divisions, attired as a Russian officer; and, favoured, as Menschikoff hopes to be, by the darkness, I shall have at least a chance of joining my country-

men, if not of rendering them a much more precious service."

"I understand. It is a desperate cast, yet one that even I would not attempt to dissuade you from."

"Thank you, my boy. Farewell! You will know what to say to my wife—to Marian. If I escape, well; if not, they will be sure I do not fill a coward's or a traitor's grave. Farewell again! God bless you, Mark, and yours!" He was gone.

Throughout that fateful night, Sebastopol remained in a state of tumultuous agitation. Exciting addresses were delivered in all the churches by the Greek clergy to crowded military audiences—addresses sealed, hallowed by the subsequent mystic celebration in midnight masses of the Last Supper and the Saviour's Passion—"Do this in remembrance of me!" Grosser, but much more pardonable stimulants, were plentifully distributed; and the Russian host poured forth to battle and assured victory, inflamed, drunken, alike with fanaticism and brandy.

About seven in the morning, Kriloff, who had been absent all night, came in. Even his earthly, wooden nature appeared to be moved by a sense, if a dim one, of the greatness of the issues about to be submitted to the bloody arbitrament of battle.

"You are early up, Mr. Henderson," he said (I had not so much as thought of bed or sleep): "for my part, I could not rest if I tried. But where is your friend Mr. Hartmann?"

"I have not seen him this morning."

"Ah, a soldier of service he, who could sleep, I doubt not, during the pauses of a *bataille rangée*. Every minute now," added the major, "is worth a hundred soldiers to holy Russia."

He drew out his watch, placed it on the table, and eagerly noted the progress of the hands. I did the same, my eyes glued to the dial; and so nervous, fascinated, did I quickly become, that it required a strong effort of will to wrench away my gaze, and jump up from the chair with the intention of taking refuge with my aunt and cousin.

Kriloff did the same at the same moment. What's that?" he exclaimed.

"Do you mean," said I, "the shaking of the window, that"——

"Window! *Tonnerre d'enfer*, that is no window! Hark again! it is volleyed musketry; and that muttering thunder is the roll of drums! The mask is dashed aside at last, and they are fairly at each others' throats! Well, God defend the right!"

"Amen!" The battle had indeed begun in furious earnest, as the swiftly deepening, widening thunder of artillery, the as rapidly increasing flashes of musketry and cannon-flame, in the direction of Inkermann, soon terribly testified. The surprise had not, apparently, been so complete as had been anticipated. Still, the British troops would be fighting at a frightful disadvantage. And Arthur Dalzell! What part had he

already played, or was now playing, in that bloody drama?

I sought shelter from these thoughts at my aunt's, and found her and Marian weeping, praying. I could do neither, blessed as the relief would have been; and I regained the street. It being Sunday, the great majority of the civilian inhabitants of Sebastopol were in the churches, where religious services—proclaimed by the incessant tolling of funeral bells to be masses for the dead and dying, falling by hundreds with every detonation of the tempest of fire raging over Inkermann—were celebrated by relays of popes, and did not cease for a moment. At about half-past nine o'clock, however, a thin stream of anxious people began to set in towards the entrance to the Inkermann-road; to reach which, in the most direct line, it was necessary to cross the Admiralty and Careening Harbours; the road itself running along the eastern margin of the Bay of Inkermann, as it is called; and which, in reality, is the inner portion of the great or main harbour. A considerable crowd was already there, watching, with pale looks, the continuous and fast-swelling influx of wounded soldiers; but no doubt appeared to be as yet entertained of ultimate victory. Albeit, as the morning wore on, a feeling of anxiety and distrust gathered strength; and in a crowded café, where I took refuge from the jostling crowd, exclamations of savage rage greeted the tidings which began to pour in soon after eleven o'clock. Presently, an officer

of rank, supporting himself upon the arm of an orderly, entered the place, and, in reply to an acquaintance, said in a low voice :

“ It is a massacre, *mon cher*. The resistance is desperate—devil-like. Still, I think we must win at last.” The friend said something, of which I only caught the word “ surprise.”

“ It would have been complete, so far as our division was concerned,” replied the new-comer, “ but for an unaccountable act of madness, or treason. We had crept up unperceived to within about two hundred yards of an English battery, on their near right. In ten minutes, the unsuspecting gunners would have been quietly bayoneted at their posts, when an officer, whom the darkness did not permit me, though very close to him, to make out distinctly, suddenly wrenched a musket from a soldier, ran forward, and fired it, shouting the while like a demon. A score of muskets were levelled at him, with what effect I cannot say ; but the mischief was, of course, irreparable ; and a shower of round and grape saluted us from the battery, which had else been ours without resistance.”

“ Dalzell ! ” my heart whispered, as those words fell upon my ear. “ Dalzell, no question ! ” and so impressed was I with the truth of that instinctive conjecture—my mind was so filled, as it were, with the hopes, the fears, to which it gave birth—that for a considerable time I was unheedful of what was passing around me. Rousing myself at last from the trance of



thought into which I had fallen, I heard a Russian official gruffly demand of a slightly wounded French officer just brought in, if his countrymen were yet engaged. "Yes," was the equally gruff rejoinder, "or I should not be here. Only a part though, as yet, of Bosquet's division; but the rest are not far off." This must have occurred about one o'clock.

The signs of defeat now multiplied apace; and by three o'clock it was acknowledged that the Russians had sustained a sanguinary repulse. The roar of battle died gradually away; the mob dispersed in sullen discontent; and each side was free to count the bloody cost—the Anglo-French, of victory; the Muscovites, of shameful overthrow. It was quite dark when I got back to the hotel, where I was much surprised to find my aunt and cousin. They had sent frequent written messages to me during the day, and, receiving no reply, had worked themselves into a panic of alarm for my safety, which nothing would allay but themselves ascertaining in person what had befallen me. We had not exchanged twenty words, when the landlord of the hotel, a civil, obliging person, informed me that I was asked for below. "A wounded Russian officer," he whispered, directly we were out of the room, "with hardly sufficient life remaining to bid the litter-bearers, who carried him off the field, bring him here. It is your friend, Monsieur Hartmann!" added the man, in a still lower whisper, and with a perturbed stare. I sprang, without replying, down-

stairs. It was indeed poor Dalzell ! At sight of me a smile gleamed over his pallid face ; and, grasping me by the hand, he made a mighty effort—feeling, no doubt, that death would be swift and sudden with him—to acquaint me with the circumstances under which he had lost his life. “ I know all,” said I, interrupting ; and I slowly and distinctly repeated what I had heard at the café. His grasp of my hand tightened as I spoke, and the darkening eyes flashed with a glow of military pride. “ You think it was well done, Mark ? ” came from his lips in a pleased bubbling murmur.

“ Think it well done ! Ah ! my brave friend, it is to the unshrinking devotion of such hearts as yours that England owes her glory and her greatness.”

“ You will tell Viola—Marian ! ” he murmured yet more faintly than before, “ and that—that ”——

He fainted, and I thought he was gone ; but pungent restoratives brought back consciousness, and I caused him to be gently carried upstairs and placed in bed. Slight delirium supervened, and for the next ten minutes the idle comments of his brain ran upon the incidents of the day in which he had taken part. The “ light before death,” as it is called, suddenly chased away those confused and shadowy images. His eye rekindled with intelligence, and his voice was full and clear, as he said : “ Viola will hear from you, Mark Henderson, that my death was not unworthy of her, or of my name and country. Ah ! sweet wife—fair child, had I but ”——

A loud scream interrupted him, and in another moment the wife so tenderly apostrophised—guided by Marian—had clasped her dying husband in her arms, and was pouring forth a torrent of broken, passionate words—words of tenderest love, of bitterest grief, of undefined but direst apprehension.

“Blessings! blessings on you, Viola,” interrupted the moribund, in that strange, solemn tone which cannot be mistaken—“on you, and on my child—blessings multiplied—unworthy as I”—— We listened intently for several minutes, but the voice returned not, and, looking more closely, I saw that he was dead!

I had cautioned the landlord not to inform Major Kriloff of what had occurred, and just after ten o'clock that gentleman came into the room where I sat alone, and swaggeringly announced that one Gabriel Derjarvin was below, by appointment, to meet Monsieur Hartmann. Gabriel Derjarvin was desired to walk up; and, after a moment's hesitation, he followed me to the death-chamber, Major Kriloff accompanying.

“We must see Monsieur Hartmann alone,” said the major, as I opened the door.

“I shall not remain an instant. There, messieurs,” I added, quickly withdrawing the concealing curtain—“there is Captain Dalzell!”

You might have felled them with a feather, and, at a sign from me, they followed downstairs like whipped spaniels.

“Captain Dalzell's papers, messieurs, apprise me of

the particulars of the bargain you hoped to conclude with him ; and I now inform you that, unless Madame Dalzell's legacy be immediately forthcoming, and passports for our departure provided, I shall at once place those papers in the hands of Prince Menschikoff."

The terror of the villains was really pitiable : they promised everything, and effectually—the money and passports were forthcoming the next day but one. On the 20th of the month—four days after the terrific storm in the Black Sea—my aunt and cousin embarked with me at Yalta ; and on the 18th of January, 1855, the *Saucy Gipsy* dropped her anchor off Staten Island—all well.

I have little more, I think, to add likely to interest the reader, except that Ruth Garstone condescended to become Mrs. Mark Henderson on the very day, I well remember, that intelligence of the death of the Czar, with—startling appositeness of retribution!—the echoes of a Turkish victory upon Russian soil, the first for two centuries, sounding in his dying ears—reached America. I may add that Ruth—but it is young days with us yet—is the same provoking, saucy gipsy as——

"Take my advice, Mark, and leave that out, or no sensible person will credit a word you have been writing."

"You there, wifie ! I was not aware you were peeping over my shoulder."

"Neither should I have been here, but for my usual

silly good-nature prompting me to come and tell you that Dr. Burton says the operation has been capitally performed, and that dear Aunt Viola will see again as well as ever. Cousin Marian is crying for joy; and, as young Carden seemed inclined to sympathetic tears, I slipped away."

"Young Carden, of Wall-street! What sympathy should he feel with Marian's joy or sorrow?"

"Now, is not that a sensible question? Positively, Mark, you can have no eyes in your head; or, if you have, they must want couching quite as much as aunt's did."

"Well, that may be a fact, and accounts for the blunder I made some time ago, in mistaking a certain damsel for a divinity, whereas"——

"There! do hold your tongue; so much scribbling is turning your brain—it is indeed! Now, don't be ridiculous, Mark"——

"Ain't that owdacious now!" chuckled my father, who that moment looked in; "two months married, and kissing! Well!"

"Your son, Mr. Henderson!" exclaimed Ruth, flaming up as red as fire, "is one of the rudest, most unmannerly"——

"It's nothing to nobody," interrupted the deaf mariner, with a consenting nod. "It's what is right, only it shouldn't keep other people's dinner waiting."











